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**REMEMBERING IN THE POSTCOLONY:
REFIGURING THE PAST WITH THEATRE**

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"To write one's autobiography, in order either to confess or to engage in self-analysis, or in order to expose oneself, like a work of art, to the gaze of all, is perhaps to seek to survive, but through a perpetual suicide – a death which is total inasmuch as fragmentary."
(Maurice Blanchot in The Writing of the Disaster, 1995: 64)

"... while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal but figural." (Walter Benjamin in The Arcades Project, 1982/1999: 463)

"Thank God our art doesn't last. At least we're not adding more junk to the museums. Yesterday's performance is by now a failure. If we accept this, we can always start again from scratch." (Peter Brook in The Shifting Point, 1988: 56)

ABSTRACT

REMEMBERING IN THE POSTCOLONY: REFIGURING THE PAST WITH THEATRE

By Mark Fleishman

This thesis is a study of remembering in the postcolony. A remembering that is less about the need to forestall forgetting than it is about a putting back together of the fractured body. It suggests that while the postcolony demands remembering, its particularities render remembering highly problematic if not impossible. It argues that performance and a particular practice of dramaturgy is one way of intervening in this process of remembering; one way of making the silent dead speak, because performance is connected to both time and silence in key ways.

The study develops a particular dramaturgical method that draws on the idea of 'dwelling' as developed by Tim Ingold, following a question posed by Heidegger on the difference between building and dwelling, and puts it to work on four 'sites of memory' (Nora, 1989) in and around the city of Cape Town: Robben Island; District Six; The Bleek & Lloyd Collection; and the archive of Slavery at the Cape. In doing so it engages with two fundamental and interconnected problems related to the themes of time and silence: how to find an appropriate image in the present for something that has passed and how to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways. It then applies the same dramaturgical method to the construction of the thesis itself, arguing that to remember the performance work produced from each site of memory requires its own process of embodied dwelling.

Themes engaged with include the resistance of the past to being known at all - the inevitable gap between the past event and the artwork in the present; the fragmentary, imagistic and ambiguous nature of the work and its refusal of closure or redemption; an embodied, sensuous and experiential approach to memory-work both in the work going on and in the work accomplished; an interest in erasure and disappearance and an anti-monumental impulse; and the shift of emphasis from the art object itself to the relationship between that object and the audience/viewer.

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University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"There is, truly, no memory except in the body of commands and demands that the past not only transmits to us but also requires us to contemplate."

(Achille Mbembe in 'What is Postcolonial Thinking?', 2008/2006: 11).

This is a project about remembering¹ in the postcolony. A remembering that is less about the need to forestall forgetting then it is about a putting back together of the fractured body (Brandstetter, 2000; Seremetakis, 2000). A postcolony defined in the terms of Achille Mbembe: the multiple, contradictory moments of everyday life in Africa read against the persistent accretions of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and neo-liberal forms of democracy (Mbembe, 2001).

Mbembe describes the postcolony as a 'timespace characterized by proliferation and multiplicity ... an era of displaced entanglements, the unity of which is produced out of differences' (2002: np). Its characteristics include volatility, excess, hysteria, racial delirium, superfluity, nervous discomfort and improvisation, flexibility and resilience. In this palimpsestuous timespace, diverse urban worlds exist in the same territory filled with discontinuous fixtures and flows and odd juxtapositions and the past has an uncanny habit of inserting itself into the present in surprising and unexpected ways (Mbembe, 2004). To live in this world is to live in a constant state of Borgesian 'amazement'.

By way of example, let me recount an anecdote. Sometime ago I had dinner at a Turkish restaurant called *Anatoli*. It is an old Cape Town restaurant but I had not eaten there for a number of years. It lies in an area of the city called De Waterkant that I remember as a collection of industrial warehouses, bars and clubs, the heart of the city's gay sub-culture. In the early colonial period, De Waterkant lay outside the bounds of the settlement, beyond the Buitengracht (the outer canal). The area was a sandy stage for hangings, torture and the burial of those elements of society who were not considered fit enough for internment in the colony's respectable cemeteries: 'slaves, free-blacks, artisans, fishermen, sailors, maids, washerwomen and their children, as well as executed criminals, suicide deaths, paupers and

¹ I choose the gerund form remembering, lying somewhere between the noun and the verb, rather than nouns like memory or remembrance, because what I have in mind is more like an event than like a thing, not a retrieval of something already there, formed and waiting, but the bringing into being of something through engagement with the traces that remain.

unidentified victims of shipwrecks' (Hart, 2003 cited in Shepherd, 2007: 7). In the 1960s De Waterkant was home to a significant portion of the city's black working class until they were forcibly removed under Apartheid's Group Areas Act and dumped in townships on the Cape Flats.

Today, *Anatoli* lies in what the city describes as a development node, surrounded by loft-style apartments, new restaurants and coffee-shops, hotels, boutiques and other businesses with bright and colourful neon signage. There are few visible markers here of the sedimented layers of past inhabitations, only signs of the new narrative of progress towards the development of Cape Town the global city, 'an architecture of erasure, a concrete covering over of the material traces of memory' (Grunebaum, 2007: 213).

As I sat in the restaurant eating and remembering and gazing through the front window, I suddenly became aware of the construction site on the opposite side of the street and the almost complete building within it and then as my eye scanned the outside of the building, a sign with its name, *The Rockwell*, and notice of the fact that there were still a few prime apartments in the building for sale. Suddenly it hit me that what I was looking at was not just any new development in the city but the development of what had become known as Prestwich Place, a site that four years earlier had been the stage for a significant eruption of the past into the fabric of the present.

In 2003, the remains of in excess of 3000 human skeletons were discovered on this site in Prestwich Street, buried beneath the building demolished to make way for the R90-million private sector, 'New York-style', 'World Class' residential development now known as *The Rockwell*. The bodies seemed to have formed part of the vast burial ground for the underclasses mentioned above, buried without grave markers or coffins. In accordance with the recently enacted National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) the developer was obliged to halt construction and to inform the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA). The developer appointed the Archaeological Contracts Office (ACO), a University of Cape Town-based unit to conduct the archaeological work on the site and the ACO applied for and was granted a permit by SAHRA to conduct 'a rescue exhumation of human remains' (SAHRA 2003 cited in Shepherd 2007: 7). The exhumations began on 11

June 2003. A few weeks later the public participation process required by the Act began with a meeting at St Stephen's church. This angry meeting was the beginning of an intense and often dramatic debate regarding what was to be done with the site and the remains. On one side stood the developers stressing daily the millions of rands that they were losing as a result of delays and the archaeologists appointed by them who were intent on removing the bones and subjecting them to scientific study to recover the 'facts in the ground'. On the other side stood the hastily formed Hands-Off Prestwich Place Ad-Hoc Committee (PPPC)², consisting of ex-anti-apartheid activists, Muslim and Christian spiritual leaders and academics from the historically black University of the Western Cape representing the interests of those communities removed from the area under Apartheid and resisting the exhumations (Shepherd, 2007: 8). In the middle stood SAHRA mandated by legislation to intervene and adjudicate in such affairs. The exact details of this confrontation have recently been the subject of a number of studies but for present purposes it would suffice to indicate that the upshot of this confrontation was that permission was granted for the bodies to be exhumed and to be removed from the site and that a new site in the vicinity was identified 'for memorializing and re-internment' (SAHRA, 2003: 6 cited in Grunebaum, 2007: 215). Furthermore, it was declared that no anatomical research would be allowed on the bones.

On a cold and wet day in April 2004 – Freedom Day in South Africa – the remains were removed from the site and taken to the Woodstock Hospital mortuary for storage until an ossuary could be built to house them. A number of the bones were carried in procession through the city in small boxes, draped with the South African flag, after having been blessed by religious leaders at the site. The ossuary in Somerset Road, Green Point was finally completed in 2008.

According to Nick Shepherd the conflict around Prestwich Place was one between archaeology conceived of as 'instrumentalist science, distanced from broader issues of culture and society' (2007: 4) and a more nuanced, multi-disciplinary research approach that 'sought to insert the events at Prestwich Street

² Originally the committee was known as the Hands Off Prestwich Street ad Hoc Committee echoing the Hands Off District Six campaign in earlier times. Later it became the Prestwich Place Project Committee (PPPC).

into a prevailing debate in post-apartheid society around notions of truth, reconciliation and restitution' (20). Are the bones artefacts, units of information, of cold, hard data or are they ancestors, to be awakened, recalled, honoured, recognized and remembered? But what exactly would such a multi-disciplinary research involve? And what was it that the PPPC was proposing for the site?

In my reading, based on the records of the public participation meetings and the submissions made by the PPPC at various stages of the administrative process, two things were being sought: time and silence.

According to Heidi Grunebaum people who attended the public participation meetings 'appealed for time to come to terms with the meaning of a burial ground in the centre of a "major node of development expansion in the city"' (SAHRA, 2003: 2 cited in Grunebaum, 2007: 213). What was being requested on the one hand was a suspension of time, an opportunity for 'countertemporality' (Grunebaum, 2007: 214) or as one person put it to open 'a time for the dead' (cited in Shepherd, 2007: 11). This was time for memory work: naming, listing, re-calling, re-storying, accounting, deferring, listening, speaking and claiming (Grunebaum, 2007: 214). On the other hand, and in an apparently contradictory way, what was being requested was a process of historicization, the locating of the site and the remains within time, marking a position within a sequence of past, present and future from which it had been excluded before.

As for silence, in their final appeal to the Minister of Arts and Culture the PPPC, expressed a desire for the exhumations, the scientific investigations and the development to be stopped and for the site to be preserved as a '*vrijplaats*' an open space for memory and identity.³ This notion of an open or free space, emptied of any new structures or uses, suggests a particular kind of silence. Nick Shepherd argues that what is required in places like Prestwich Street is an 'archaeology of silence, of secrecy, of closure (rather than disclosure)' (Shepherd, 2007: 21) to prevent the 'archi-violence' Keisuke Sato writes about, the material and

³ According to Nick Shepherd, the term '*vrijplaats*', as used in this context, comes from Christian Ernsden, 'a graduate student in the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town who followed events closely' (2007: 12). In this regard, see Ernsden (2006).

epistemological 'violence done against sites and remains in the process of archaeological investigation' (Sato, 2006 cited in Shepherd, 2007: 21).

But the call for silence displays an obvious contradiction. On the one hand those who call for the silence deplore the erasures that cause the silence. On the other hand, they can offer no way of alleviating the silence except by offering more silence.⁴ This gives rise to many questions. What might render silence articulate? How might silence be made to speak in unspeakable ways? Is there an ethics of silence? As Julian Jonker asks: who has the ethical right to speak *for* the dead and *of* the dead? How may the dead be made to speak and of what will they speak (Jonker, 2005: 50 and 51, emphasis in original)?

What the example of Prestwich Place indicates is that while the postcolony demands remembering, its particularities render remembering highly problematic if not impossible. In this thesis, I will argue that performance and a particular practice of dramaturgy is one way of intervening in this process of remembering; one way of making the silent dead speak, because performance is connected to both time and silence in key ways.

I use the term performance here, rather than drama or theatre, because the works produced as part of this project display a wide range of live performance genres and combinations of these and do not easily reduce to traditional notions of theatre or drama. However, I am loath to dispense of theatre completely as the title of the thesis as a whole indicates.⁵

⁴ The silence caused by 'erasure' is of course different from a consciously conceived project of silence as an ethical response. As Julian Jonker argues, there is a need to 'differentiate between *articulate* silence and *inarticulate* silence, or even to describe silence as a dialectic of the articulate and the inarticulate' (2005: 68, emphasis in original). However, it is my contention that the differentiation does not do away with the contradiction and its resultant demand for response.

⁵ This is partly because I think the shift from theatre to performance, particularly from the perspective of the US academy, is somewhat overstated. As theatre scholar Willmar Sauter has indicated the European academy has always accommodated a wide variety of forms within the idea of theatre both inside and outside of buildings called theatres.

At least for Northern European scholars the term 'theatre' does not designate any given genre of artistic activities. There are at least five major types of theatrical expressions, which are conventionally looked upon as theatre: spoken drama, music theatre, dance theatre, mime / pantomime, and puppet theatre. These types of theatre are not mutually exclusive ... nor is the list complete. Circus, cabarets, parades, and radio theatre are just a few examples that could be added. (2000: 43)

In the US tradition, theatre is one part of the broader category of performance that includes all those things listed by Sauter above and, for example, rituals, festivals and the diverse performances of everyday life - Schechner's 'broad spectrum' (1988). In the European tradition, theatre remains tied to its origins as 'a place for

My background is in theatre and while I have always argued that, particularly in an African context, a limited understanding of what theatre can accommodate has always been counter-productive, I still essentially feel that making theatre is what I do however porous and contaminated that idea might have become over time in my practice. I have for a long time argued that the linking of theatre to dramatic literature was a political process designed to enforce a particular dynamic of power vis-à-vis other less literary and more physical forms of theatrical practice, even within European theatrical history, and that when a European tradition of theatre was imported into Africa as part of the colonial project, it was the dominant literary part of that tradition that was imported and that set about side-lining the existent African practices of a non-literary theatre that were more diverse in their practices and accommodations (Fleishman, 1991).

Therefore, as the thesis proceeds there will be some slippage backwards and forwards between theatre and performance for which I make no apology. At times I will use the composite form 'theatre/performance' when I think there is little distinguishing the two or when there is a particular active relation between the two in the work under consideration.

Central to all the theatre/performances engaged with in this study is an insistence on the primacy of the body and its relationship to space and a concurrent devaluation of the verbal text. This is fundamental to the idea of speaking 'the unspeakable' that is at the heart of the project.⁶

seeing' and theatricality is conceived of as a way of seeing, 'a dynamic of perception, creating between the spectator and the one looked at (the actor) the special condition of theatricality' (Reinelt, 2002: 207). This is particularly evident in the writing of Josette Féral who, although Canadian, is closely linked to French and Russian thinking on the subject:

If the notion of theatricality goes beyond the theater, it is because it is not a 'property' belonging to the subjects/things that are its vehicles. It belongs neither to the objects, the space, nor to the actor himself, although each can become its vehicle. Rather, theatricality is the result of a perceptual dynamics linking the onlooker with someone or something that is looked at. This relationship can be initiated either by the actor who declares his intention to act, or by the spectator who, of his own initiative, transforms the other into a spectacular object. (Féral, 2002: 105)

In this European view performance is merely one element of the theatrical event and the idea of theatricality as a mode of perception.

⁶ This challenge to speak 'the unspeakable' is articulated by Julian Jonker at the end of the second chapter of his MA thesis, a chapter entitled 'The Ethics of Memory and Silence' (Jonker, 2005: 75).

Starting in 2002 and continuing up until the time of writing I have created a series of performance projects that engage with key 'sites of memory' in and around the city of Cape Town. The term is taken from Pierre Nora (1989)⁷ and refers to a conglomerate of physical, material and archival sites that function to concentrate remembrance in a world in which, to paraphrase James Young, the more we monumentalise, the more we seem to have 'divested ourselves of the obligation to remember' (2000: 94).⁸ In making each of the works that are included in the project, my collaborators and I faced two fundamental and interconnected problems related to the themes of time and silence: how to find an appropriate image in the present for something that has passed and how to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways.

The project is part of the particular landscape of post-apartheid South Africa, a society in transition, struggling to come to terms with its past and the realities and challenges of its present, whilst creating a sustainable future. Within this landscape, debates about heritage, memory and history are of great concern. In particular, the project takes place against the background of Cape Town's own transformation from colonial 'mother city' to one of the more recent metropolitan additions to Mbembe's African postcolony.

The sites I have focused on are:

- Robben Island (place of banishment and incarceration and its museum and archive);
- District Six (apartheid evacuated working-class city district and its museum and archive);
- The Bleek and Lloyd collection of /Xam records (an ethnographic archive housed in the library of the University of Cape Town and more recently accessible on the internet);

⁷ 'His [Nora's] project, titled *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, involved a rereading of the French past through its symbolic, functional and material traces, creating a horizontal "mapping" of the "places where memories converge, condense, conflict, and define relationships between past, present, and future" in a world no longer suffused with memory' (Zemon Davis and Stam, 1989: 3).

⁸ It is worth emphasizing that in the sense that it is intended here, a site need not be a place, it could just as well be an object or a set of objects, an archive of documents or images, or a piece of music, or combinations of all of these.

- The archive of slavery at the Cape (a dispersed collection of trial records, household inventories, legal and bureaucratic documents and physical sites).

These are not just any sites; they are what might be termed sensitive sites. They are sites that embody a history of 'extreme events' (Roth and Salas, 2001: 3). They contain 'disturbing remains', the disturbance of which raises difficult questions and requires an ethical approach. I will return to this question of ethics in some detail later.

The productions and projects created from these sensitive sites are respectively:

- *53 Degrees* (2002-2003)
- *Onnest'bo* (2002-2006)
- *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (2004-2005) and the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* (ongoing since 2001)
- *Cargo* (2006-2007)

They were all created with my company Magnet Theatre, a professional company that has operated in South Africa and abroad for the past 24 years.⁹ Most have been done in partnership – primarily with the Jazzart Dance Theatre (Cape Town's most prominent contemporary dance company)¹⁰ but also with the District Six Museum in the case of *Onnest'bo*. The productions and projects listed above constitute the material for the study but the focus is on a way of working, a particular dramaturgical approach that uses performance to remember: an attempt to put back together the fractured body of the postcolony even when/if so little remains.¹¹

To remember is also to engage with ghosts and the particular ways in which they haunt contemporary Cape Town. For Avery Gordon (1997) haunting is a state in which that which is not there, that which is past or lost or missing or simply not

⁹ For more information on the company see <http://www.magnettheatre.co.za> and see appendix A.

¹⁰ For more information on the company see <http://www.jazzart.co.za>.

¹¹ As will become clear in the next chapter, to remember is also an attempt to put back together the body of work itself now that it is no longer performed and so little remains.

clearly visible manifests as a 'seething presence'. Ghosts are the signs of that presence, the ways in which that which is absent is made apparent to us. Gordon suggests that engaging with a ghost 'is about putting life back in where only a vague memory or a bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look' (22). She goes on to say that a ghost inserts a kind of strangeness into a place that unsettles its 'propriety and property' (64), but a ghost also offers us future possibilities and a sense of hope, an opportunity to 'repair representational mistakes' and to create a 'countermemory for the future' (22). This is because a ghost is 'pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding' and '[t]his something to be done is not a return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present, a reckoning with that which we have lost, but never had' (83). Gordon suggests that 'we must reckon with it [the ghost] graciously, attempting to offer it a hospitable memory *out of a concern for justice*' (64, emphasis in the original).

To remember in the postcolony then is to reckon with its ghosts. To do so graciously and with a concern for justice suggests an ethical approach. But Gordon reminds us that haunting traffics in the '*affective mode*' (127, emphasis in original) and to reckon with it requires an experiential and embodied engagement and suggests a different way of knowing, a different order of knowledge – what she describes as 'sensuous knowledge':

Sensuous knowledge is receptive, close, perceptual, embodied incarnate [...]. It tells and it transports at the same time. [...] Sensuous knowledge always involves knowing and doing. Everything is in the experience with sensuous knowledge. Everything rests on not being afraid of what is happening to you. (Gordon, 1997: 205).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study traverses two broad areas: historiography and ethics. I will begin by outlining my particular approach to historiography and then move on to ethics.

The study as a whole is a history in the sense that it is a looking back at five productions/projects that have been but are no more, productions/projects that themselves engage with events from the past that have been but are no more. But

is it history? Yes, if history is understood as an aesthetic. In this sense it is firmly on that side of the debate that sees history as an aesthetic project more than an epistemology. It follows ideas presented by numerous philosophers of history in recent times (Foucault, 1966/1970 and 1969/1972; White, 1973, 1978 and 1987; Koselleck, 1985; Lowenthal, 1985; Kellner, 1989; Nora, 1989; Ankersmit 1994). It sees history-making as a reconstruction or refiguration of the remains from the past according to specific rules of narration. History in this sense is a particular class of literature (Munslow, 2006). History is as much 'made' or 'imagined' as 'found' (Ankersmit, 1994; White, 1973). It involves a process of choosing from a vast range of possible fragments and then assembling those fragments in particular ways without ever pretending that the assemblage constitutes the whole picture. According to this view, histories are not representations as much as presentations or proposals and they refer not to a past actuality but to other textual presentations in the present. As Ermarth puts it: "'the past" no longer functions as evidence or as the lost launcher of the present, but instead as a dimension of present events or enunciation' (2004: 75).

History in this study is not the history of the past as much as it is the history of the present.¹² And it is a particular present; the present of the postcolony that is not, as I have already argued, easily remembered. The post-colonial body is too fractured to be easily reconstituted into simple narrative. We set out in search of coherence, of new ways of being together, but the forms that emerge tend towards disruption and discontinuity and ultimately dissolve back into fragments. In this sense, each production is a proposed response to the problematics of remembering in the postcolony and each proposal is also an inevitable failure and a celebration of that failure. It cannot make fully present what has gone before but is now absent. What it can do is to offer mnemonic provocations so that the audience might creatively remember, might bring fragments or remains of the past together in the present into a narrative of restitution. But the narrative aims for no resolution, no redemption, no sense of closure. It is an assemblage that is, as Gilles Deleuze suggests with reference to the poetry of Walt Whitman, 'a whole that is all the more

¹² See Foucault, 1975/1979: 31.

paradoxical in that it only comes *after* the fragments and leaves them intact, making no attempt to totalize them' (1993/1998: 58, emphasis in the original).

So 'as the state busily tries to memorialize and museumize, to build new monuments and historic landscapes that are supposed to bring together the different fragments of the nation' (Mbembe, 2004: 404), transforming the past into a site of petrified signification pronouncing new rights and truths, domesticated and purged of all ambiguity, productions such as those that are the subject of this study propose an alternative version of remembering. A remembering that is an active and embodied project, a project that recognizes, to quote Keith Jenkins, that the past 'is never over and done with but must be made tomorrow and the day after' (2003: 30), as must all performances. And a remembering that is also ultimately a dismembering – that dissolves into fragments almost as soon as it suggests a particular figural coherence; that keeps fragile contradictions and tentative adventures in play for a short duration and then watches them disappear, as do all performances.

This leads us on to the second conceptual focus of this study, that of ethics. As I indicated earlier, the sites of memory focused on in the productions/projects are sensitive sites that contain 'disturbing remains', the disturbance of which raises difficult questions and requires an ethical approach. In this study I am not concerned with an ethics of values; with a value-based set of rules that determine how we should or should not act. I am concerned with an ethics of engagement that draws on the ideas of Alain Badiou.¹³

There are parallels between my project and Badiou's own political project to force the recognition of the 'sans papiers' – those without papers, without official permission to be in France – to acknowledge the truth of their existence. My work on what remains from the past (a particular past) also involves animating a recognition of what has been rendered absent both by time and by official discourses. I too seek a presence (however partial) that enables a 'truth' to be affirmed and recognised.

¹³ Badiou's ideas on ethics are set out in his major work *L'Être et l'événement* published in 1988 (translated as *Being and Event* in 2005) and the more recent *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (1993/2001) and *Saint Paul: the foundation of universalism* (1997/2003).

For Badiou ethics should not be driven by a desire to protect the human rights of others less fortunate than ourselves which involves casting oneself as the 'active determining subject of judgment – he who in identifying suffering, knows that it must be stopped by all available means' (1993/2001: 9). Nor should ethics be motivated by an imperative to tolerate difference that Badiou argues is limited by our own limitations, by the impossibility of ever accommodating difference particularly radical difference or the 'altogether other' (Ingram, 2005: 564). For Badiou, an ethical approach driven by values keeps the status quo intact and prevents the possibility – however remote – of overcoming the situation through projects of engagement. So the silence is kept silent because it is 'good', because it is the best we can do under the circumstances, because silence averts the worst possible outcomes: 'the play of necessity as the objective basis for all judgments of value' (Badiou, 1993/2001: 32). An ethics of engagement is not about protecting the weak or those who cannot protect themselves or about managing difference; it is about our capacity to act, to create, to think affirmatively and co-operatively. It is not about preventing evil but about doing good.

In his major work, *Being and the Event* (1988/2005), Badiou divides the world in two. There is the 'situation': the world as is, static and self-perpetuating; defined as the realm of being: 'The multiplicity of being qua being' (Cobussen, 2005: 30). And there is the 'event': something foreign inserted into the situation that the situation cannot assimilate, that escapes from pre-established categories and frames. For Badiou, the event causes a rupture, an opening. It names the 'void', the not-known of the situation, in our terms, the silences (Badiou, 1993/2001: 40-44 and 67-69). These openings Badiou refers to as 'truths' not in the sense of facts but in the sense of revelations and these 'truths' are always partial never total.

In an article on the music of improvising musician Evan Parker, Marcel Cobussen (2005) links the concept of noise to the ethics proposed by Badiou. He describes noise as subversive, 'an aggression against all sorts of code, against all kinds of order', with the potential to initiate transformation. In this sense he links noise to Badiou's idea of the 'event' that 'breaks from the status quo or ordinary situation' (30).

From this it follows that to make noise is to disrupt the situation, to initiate events that have the capacity to transform the situation, the regime of established knowledge. Noise as an event is a supplement, in Derridean terms, both an addition to what is known and a replacement or substitution. It brings something new into being; a new way of seeing the world.

In this study, to say that we are taking an ethical approach does not mean adopting an approach based on a set of ethical rules or *a priori* principles that determine the 'correct' way of dealing with sensitive sites. It means ethical principles arise through engagement, in other words, through an ongoing process of work. Ethics in these terms is not a set of abstract injunctions but a set of concrete obligations.

In my process, the ethics of engagement operates on two levels – the level of the performers' engagement with the material in the creative process and the level of the audience's engagement with the images in the performance. What is required at both levels is to avoid the absolute, predetermined definition of a 'truth'. Instead, what is required is an encounter with the event, an experience of a 'truth' as 'something that happens to you' (Badiou, 1993/2001: 51).

In the process of improvisation, outlined above, the performer does not interpret the 'truth' of the fragment and then act on it. When faced with the fragment as proposition, the performer either responds spontaneously, in the moment, to whatever impulses arise from the layering of perceptual and recalled imagery¹⁴, or reverts to the known, to a set of learnt or predetermined responses. The same can be said for the audience when faced with a particular image in the performance.

The point of engagement encapsulates the potential for an 'emerging truth' and confronts the performer/audience member with an ethical demand: either to experience the truth and to act accordingly or to deny the truth and to revert to the known. It is in this moment of engagement that our sense of self, 'who and what we think we are' (Fisher, 2005: 249), comes into play. The emerging truth either challenges our sense of self or confirms it, and either we act to defend ourselves or

¹⁴ See Damasio, 1995: 96 and 97 and this study page 45.

we open ourselves to change in the moment. In this way the ethical becomes our truth. In working on the fragments, as performers or audience, we disturb our own situation at the same time that we disturb the situation of the site we are working in.

Every truth, according to Badiou, has a particular origin but nevertheless transcends its particularity: 'Although the event depends on the site of its being, it must be independent of it in its truth effects' (1997/2003: 23). So every engagement begins with a specific point of origin, a particular fragment gathered in the archival phase of the process and this serves as a key. But then, perforce, it transcends this specific point of origin. In this way the effect produced does not re-enact the fragment, it refigures it; it opens up its possibilities. In Badiou's words, it 'breaks with the axiomatic principle that governs the situation' (1997/2003: 11) not by entering into competition with it but by suggesting new alternatives (innovating).

One critique of Badiou is that he remains in the realm of possibility so that while he can 'theorize the revolution he has no idea how to realize it, let alone institutionalize it' (Ingram, 2005: 569). But does this not miss the point? Is the point not in fact to resist institutionalisation? In other words, in the terms of this study, to avoid the idea of memorialisation that is fixed in monuments. It seems to me that Badiou's approach offers a tactical alternative, to remain indeterminate and to resist images of fixity – Truths with a capital 'T', even and especially if they are new Truths.

What I am proposing is that performance in its essential indeterminacy might provide a possible way of doing this. In our work on the fragments that remain from the past, in our attempts to find appropriate images for the past in the present, in our desire to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways, we seek no One Truth, no fixed or stable meaning, only 'truths', moments of revelation, innovation through action.

A SHORT REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on the performance of history or the use of performance as a form of remembering in South Africa is extremely limited. This in itself points to the potential contribution of this study. In fact, a literature search of these keywords reveals only two articles other than those previously written by myself, Cathy

Maree's article entitled *Theatre and the Struggle of Memory Against Forgetting in Spain, Latin America and South Africa* (1998) and Yvette Hutchison's *Memory & Desire in South Africa* (2004).¹⁵ In the first article Maree examines Andre Brink's play *The Jogger* along with similar plays from Spain, Argentina and Chile, in order to compare the ways in which theatre has confronted the legacy of gross human rights abuses perpetrated by oppressive and dictatorial regimes. In the article she raises the problem of aestheticising atrocities and asks whether theatre can or should represent the unrepresentable? Whether a social science text is the only appropriate site for recording such horrors? And whether a stage production might not risk transforming the real practice of torture into a fiction or even a form of pornographic display?

In the second article, Hutchison focuses not on theatre/performance in its conventional sense but on the ways in which 'commemorative spaces' such as the Robben Island Museum and the District Six Museum and those who visit them, perform memory (54). She asks whether there is a difference between actual memory and a desire to remember and whether such a distinction is significant? She suggests that museums operate best when they borrow from theatre/performance to create spaces for a kind of participatory and communal playing by means of which visitors, with various levels of relationship to the past that is being commemorated, can 'actively recover and collate memory' and 'negotiate stories and identities for themselves' (54).

Indeed, the literature on visual culture and museum practice in South Africa post-apartheid is somewhat more extensive than is the case with the literature on performance as a way of remembering, with Annie E. Coombes's *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (2003) being the most prominent example. Despite its obvious material and visual emphasis, this work is pertinent to my concerns not least because it deals with three

¹⁵ There has, of course, been a body of practice in South Africa that engages with the historical archive. Most notably the work of Junction Avenue Theatre Company in productions such as *Randlords and Rotgut* (1978), *Marabi Dance* (1982) and *Sophiatown* (1986), often in collaboration with the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand; but also, for example, David Kramer and Taliep Peterson's *District Six – The Musical* (1986). My focus at this point, however, is on the literature that engages with the issues this kind of work throws up and not on the practice.

of the sites my work has focused on, but also because it explores the specific 'conflict and contestation over different models of historical knowledge and narrative' and strategies for their embodiment in the context of South Africa's transformation (11). Interestingly for the current study, Coombes argues that 'monuments are animated and reanimated only through performance and that performances and rituals focused around a monument are conjunctural' (12).

There are a number of texts written by international scholars however, which, although not focused on South Africa, deal with many of the central concerns of the current study. Most of these focus on representations of the *Shoah* and the particular ethical concerns that this limit case throws up. I will therefore spend some time focusing on some of these key texts, particularly Freddie Rokem's *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (2000) and Jeanette R. Malkin's *Memory-Theatre and Postmodern Drama* (1999). In addition, I believe the work of James E. Young, even though it is focused on the visual arts, is extremely important for anyone working in the area of memory and memorialisation particularly in the aftermath of atrocities. I will therefore discuss some of his ideas below, as outlined particularly in *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (2000). These texts raise important concerns and challenges that arise within and inform my own work but they also provide something of an art historical context for my performances and the dramaturgical method developed to produce them – the ways in which other artists have struggled with these concerns and challenges in other contexts.

Rokem examines a number of productions by Israeli companies that focus on the *Shoah* and then a number of productions from Europe and America that focus on the French Revolution. My interest here is particularly on the former. Of the three productions that deal with the *Shoah*, *Arbeit macht frei vom Totland Europa* (1991), directed by Dudu Ma'ayan at the Akko Theatre Centre, is the only one created by the company. The other two are dramatic texts written by playwrights that pre-existed the particular productions discussed. These are *Ghetto* by Joshua Sobol (1984) and Hanoch Levin's, *The Boy Dreams* (1993).¹⁶

¹⁶ These dates refer to the first productions. *The Boy Dreams* was published as a play-text in 1991.

Rokem identifies three modes of representation occurring variously in these productions and with differing emphases. These modes he calls 'testimony, documentation, and metatheatrical/the fantastic' (33-4). While the first is connected to the actor as witness, an important idea in the text as will become clear below, and the second involves a kind of documentary realism in which the horrific events from the past are re-performed in the present, the third mode is more complex. It is developed from the ideas of Tzvetan Todorov who Rokem quotes as follows: 'in a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world' (1975: 25 cited in Rokem, 2000: 36). Rokem's argument is that this fantastic element in an otherwise everyday world is used in the productions to 'confront the issue of the incomprehensibility and incommunicability of the Shoah' (36). For Todorov such fantastic elements create an ambiguity in the reader (spectator here) that sets up a hesitation, and the need to deal with this hesitation makes the reader/spectator a more active participant in the event (37).

For Rokem, '[h]istory can only be perceived as such when it becomes recapitulated, when we create some form of discourse, like the theatre, on the basis of which an organized repetition of the past is constructed, situating the chaotic torrents of the past into an aesthetic frame' (xi). He goes on to suggest that this is probably also the case with more conventional forms of history writing. He is interested primarily in the particular 'complex paradoxes and tensions' (xiii) that arise when the historical past is brought into the theatrical present and the images that emerge as a result, which he defines, with recourse to Walter Benjamin, thus:

It's not that what has past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. (Benjamin, 1982/1999: 463 cited in Rokem, 2000: xiii)

Rokem is clear that when we see past events represented on stage we are not experiencing these events themselves but a re-performance of them and this gives rise to a "'ghostly" dimension' (6). The performers re-enact elements of the past but the theatrical event never becomes the past nor do the performers become the historical figures they are performing. Rokem is concerned with the

time lag that exists between the *then* of the past events and the *now* of the theatrical representation and what he calls 'the actor's role as ... witness which determines the kind of relationship a certain production develops with the historical past' (9). The actor as witness bridges the gap between the past and the present and in this way becomes:

a kind of historian ... a 'hyper-historian', who makes it possible for us – even in cases where the reenacted events are not fully acceptable for the academic historian as a 'scientific' representation of that past – to recognize that the actor is 'redoing' or 'reappearing' as something/somebody that has actually existed in the past. (2000: 13)

The actor as hyper-historian is for Rokem a particularly embodied idea in which the actor uses her body, her emotions as well as particular ideological commitments to re-enact events from the past. As such the actor is not distanced in the manner of a typical academic historian but experiencing the events re-enacted from within. An aspect central to this embodied approach is the manipulation of energies, an idea well understood in all performance but here focused in a particular way in Rokem's discussion. He references Aristotle who describes *energeia* (force) and *enargeia* (shining forth) as the rhetorical means by which a speaker makes objects appear 'before the eyes of the listener' (189). Just as a witness in a courtroom brings the events of a case to life so too the actor on stage, performing history, brings back to life the events of the past through the play of energies. 'By examining the notion of energy in the theatre', Rokem writes:

I wish to raise the question to what extent it is possible to view this art – and in particular the theatre performing history – as a form of expressing vital and creative energies. When this happens and when the different spheres of theatrical energies become fully integrated, the individual actor can be perceived as a hyper-historian, a witness presenting testimony for the spectators. (192)

But Rokem also proposes that theatre performing history has the capacity to unleash what he calls restorative energies, 'in the sense of recreating something which has been irretrievably lost and attempting at least on the imaginative level and in many cases on the intellectual and emotional levels, to restore that loss' (13). Theatre performing history is in this respect an active process that sets out

to overcome the potential destructive energies of past events rather than simply becoming occasions for mourning.

While most of Rokem's ideas are relevant in some respect to my interests it is in his discussion of the production, *Arbeit macht frei vom Toitland Europa*, that he comes closest to my thinking. This is partly because the production is not written by a playwright but created collectively by the company through a process of physical making similar to my own dramaturgical process which itself is a major subject of concern in my study. But it is also because it consciously sets up a relationship of active memory-work between the spectators and the performers so it is not something to be absorbed but something to be engaged in and with. As Selma, one of the characters, who claims to be a survivor of the *Shoah* says to the audience right at the beginning of the performance: 'we will do work together' (quoted in Rokem, 2000: 61) and Rokem suggests that the 'production itself could perhaps be seen as ... a creative and theatrical "working through" of the Shoah trauma' (57), a working through that engages the bodies of both performer and spectator. This is particularly, but not exclusively, because the production is 'environmental theatre' in which the audience is on the move, first in a tourist bus, then guided through a museum, then visiting Selma's house, rather than remaining seated in one location with a fixed view of a stage. Rokem quotes Una Chaudhuri in this regard as follows:

naturalism rested on a fantasy of total visibility, of the impossible translation of private experience into public expression. This problematic of a public privacy survives long after naturalism, persisting into environmental theatre, where its presence is occluded by new spatial arrangements designed to create 'shared experiences' (shared that is between the audience and the actors). (Chaudhuri, 1995: 17, cited in Rokem, 2000, 71).

In her work Malkin (1999) argues that postmodernism has initiated 'a shift *in the way we remember*, and hence in the way culture, and for our purposes, the theater, represents and reenacts remembering' (4, emphasis in original). In place of coherent narratives proceeding in a linear and ordered fashion, which she aligns with enlightenment modernism, Malkin identifies a 'postmodernist memory-theater' characterised by conflation, disruption and repetition in which

‘linearity, causality ... the unified subject and world ... a source (however trivial) that can be recovered through memory ... are questioned and exploded’ (22).

Memory-theater might be doubly defined as theater that imitates conflicted and sometimes repressed or erased memories of a shared past; and as a theater that initiates processes of remembrance through practices of repetition, conflation, regression, through recurrent scenes, involuntary voice, echoing, overlap and simultaneity. (8)

In particular she focuses on the way these productions are ‘shaped through fragment, recurrence and imagistic tumult’ (4). She highlights the importance in this emerging postmodern work of voice and image rather than narrative or character, of the collective rather than the individual, and the interactive over the self-sufficient, intact text.

For Malkin, the fragmented, chaotic even traumatized form of ‘postmodern memory-theater’ is difficult to “read” or organize – or bind’ (29), forcing the audience to engage actively with the task of remembering while at the same time refusing any easy sense of ‘reconstruction, recuperation, or of a Proustian “salvationist” restoration of the past’ (10). As she puts it, ‘it is left to the audience to construct – or not – a future for the pasts that appear, but do not cohere, in this theater’ (35). Attention therefore has shifted from the object itself to the complex and evolving transaction between the spectator and the object (18), and it is on this transaction, with a particular audience at a particular time, that for Malkin, ‘the *political* effect ... of postmodern (memoried) art depends’ (215, emphasis in original).

Malkin also emphasises the relation between memory and forgetting in the plays she studies which she describes as paradoxical:

The paradox is clear: this form of theater – which obsessively recalls the past, and especially the wounds of the past, in a form that frustrates remembrance ... of the past – consequently defeats unambiguous memorialization. [...] [T]hese plays create a theater that insists we remember – while it prepares us to forget. (35)

Malkin’s ideas overlap in many respects with my interests in the current study but as with Rokem her focus is on dramatic literature and on the particular output of writers for the theatre such as Samuel Beckett, Heiner Müller, Sam Shepard, Thomas Bernard, and Suzan-Lori Parks. As she herself writes:

It has been my intention in this book to focus on the double matrix of, on the one hand, a

distinctive postmodern theater aesthetic, and, on the other, a memoried – *textually* based – dramaturgy. (218, emphasis in original)

As I have made clear above, one of my primary objectives in this project has been to develop a dramaturgy which deviates from the ‘textually based dramaturgy’ that Malkin focuses on with its particular Euro-American concerns and practices, in favour of a more collective and embodied process more in tune with its location in Africa.

James E. Young has written some of the most important work on the history and process of memorialisation of the *Shoah*. His most recent work however is particularly focused on how it is possible to remember events that we have not experienced directly. As he comments, the post-war generation:

of artists, writers and architects, and even composers does not attempt to represent events it never knew immediately but instead portrays its own, necessarily hypermediated experiences of memory. It is a generation no longer willing, or able to recall the Holocaust separately from the ways it has been passed down. (2000: 1)

He lists a number of inter-related ideas that the artists he studies (cartoonist Art Spiegelman, photographer David Levinthal, installation artists, Shimon Attie and Jochen Gerz, and architect Daniel Libeskind) and by extension he himself, are preoccupied with. These preoccupations include the need for forms of representation that are anti-redemptory; a focus on the experience of the memory-act itself; a reflection on the void of what has been destroyed rather than on the details of the horrific destruction itself (9).

In explicating the work of this post-war generation of artists, Young explores the ways in which they are centrally concerned with memory-work, ‘the difficult attempt to know, to imagine vicariously, and to make meaning out of experiences they never knew directly’ (9). Furthermore, he draws on the distinction made by historian Saul Friedlander between ‘common memory’ which ‘tends to restore or establish coherence, closure and possibly a redemptive stance’ and ‘deep memory’ which ‘remains essentially inarticulable and unrepresentable, that which continues to exist as unresolved trauma just beyond the reach of meaning’ (Friedlander, 1992: 41). Friedlander calls for a historiography that integrates both the common and the deep memory, a writing of history that is constantly disrupted by ‘the sound of the

historian's own self-conscious voice' (Young, 2000: 14), always attempting to resist closure and to suggest alternative versions and other questions. For Young, such an integrated historiography, 'gestures both to the existence of deep, inarticulable memory and its own incapacity to deliver that memory' (14). It is his contention that the artists he studies are engaged in such a project, their work foregrounding the difficulty of remembering what was not directly experienced, the experience of the inter-generational transmission of past events, and how the telling of a story in one way necessarily masks the ways in which the story can never be told. For example, with reference to Spiegelman's *Maus*, he notes how it echoes with 'the ambient noise and issues that surround its telling' and 'that it tells both the story of events and its own unfolding as narrative' (18). Furthermore,

[b]y making the recovery of the story itself a visible part of *Maus*, Spiegelman can also hint darkly at the story not being recovered here, how telling one story always leaves another untold, how common memory masks deep memory. (29)

Using the example of David Levinthal's photographs of toy objects, he points to the particular ambiguity the photographer employs to achieve the above and the specific role envisaged for the viewer in this process. Levinthal refers to his images as operating in a 'narrative style' which is 'intentionally ambiguous to draw the viewer in so that you make your own story' (Levinthal, 1993: 7 cited in Young, 2000: 51) or as he puts it elsewhere: 'I think I create a window that allows the viewer to come into an image that appears to be more complete than it really is. It becomes complete when the viewer becomes a participant and fills in the missing details' (Stainback & Woodward, 1997: 153 cited in Young, 2000: 51). Levinthal achieves this by employing a technique that blurs both background and foreground of the image and situates the focal plane either just behind or just in front of the toy object itself. Young's suggestion is that '[r]ather than concentrating the mind on the toy object, the focal plane takes us into the space between it and us – where the mind is forced to imagine and thereby collaborate' (2000: 52). Meaning thus arises through a process, a kind of 'tug-of-war between image and viewer, not in the image or viewer alone' (54).

In discussing the work of installation artist Jochen Gerz, Young focuses on

another of his central concerns: 'is it possible to enshrine an antimonumental impulse in monumental forms?' (10). Gerz believes that monuments end up taking over the work of memory, doing away with the need for active and ongoing remembering by people. He proposes the idea of a disappearing or invisible monument. If art, Gerz has said, 'were truly consumed, no longer visible or conspicuous [...], it would actually be where it belongs – that is, within the people for whom it was created' (von Drätelin, 1989: 47 cited in Young, 2000: 53).

While Gerz is interested in disappearance, architect Daniel Libeskind focuses on the void created by the destruction of European Jewry. Young examines Libeskind's designs for the Berlin Museum's Jewish Museum extension. According to Libeskind:

The new extension is conceived as an emblem where the not visible has made itself apparent as a void, an invisible. [...] [T]he idea is very simple: to build the museum around a void that runs through it, a void that is to be experienced by the public. (Libeskind, 1991: 63)

Libeskind's idea is not only to make the void stand for what has been destroyed and is no more, but to use the void to interrupt the flow of the narrative of the museum itself – 'architectural, spatial and thematic gaps in the presentation of Jewish history in Berlin' (Young, 2000: 178). As one moves through the building one crosses over bridges passing through the graphite black shells housing the void. The void is there, visibly empty but sealed, inaccessible to all, beyond experience. For Young:

Implied in any museum's collection is that what you see is all there is to see, all that there ever was. By placing architectural 'voids' throughout the museum, Libeskind has tried to puncture this museological illusion. What you see here he seems to say, is actually only a mask for all that is missing, for the great absence of life that now makes a presentation of these artifacts a necessity. The voids make palpable a sense that much more is missing than can ever be shown. (Young, 2000: 179)

The work of these writers and the artists they write about illuminate many key elements of my own project: the resistance of the past to being known at all - the inevitable gap between the past event and the artwork in the present or for that matter, the gap between an artwork that has passed and its writing in the present; the fragmentary, imagistic and ambiguous nature of the work and its refusal of closure or redemption; an embodied, sensuous and experiential approach to memory-work; an interest in disappearance and an anti-monumental impulse; and

the shift of emphasis from the art object itself to the relationship between that object and the audience/viewer. But while this provides the intellectual context for the study, its particular contribution, beyond a simple shift of focus from post-Auschwitz to postcolony, is its focus on remembering and the specific dramaturgical process developed to enact it, a process to which I turn in the next chapter.

STRUCTURE

This thesis is made up of seven sections: this introduction; a methodology chapter; a chapter for each of the five productions/projects, the last of which will also double as a reluctant conclusion. Each production/project chapter will:

1. Attempt to translate the particular production/project with words and photographic images;
2. Discuss a particular theme or set of themes emerging from that particular production/project.

The individual sections of the thesis follow each other in a particular sequence. The sequence reflects the order in which the productions/projects came into existence. But in doing so, it will 'submit to the sequential ... grudgingly and at every juncture [keep] alive ... an awareness of multiple pathways and constantly crossing themes' (Ermarth, 1992: 53). Each move forward is also a move sideways. If it is a sequence it is perhaps an anthematic sequence from Nabokov's idea of an 'anthemion':

An interlaced, flower-like design where themes and patterns arrive and depart from various posting places, recurring and re-crossing without exact repetition and yet providing a kind of rhythmic iteration and patterning. (Ermarth, 2000: 415).

It is in the spaces between (in what Nabokov calls the 'tender intervals') that opportunities for significance arise.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This is not a Performance as Research (PaR)¹⁷ project in the obvious sense that it is submitted according to the conventional rules for the PhD that require a thesis of no more than 80,000 words which is the actual object of examination. But in two further senses it is very much engaged with PaR. First in the sense that it is about a PaR project: a series of four productions and an ongoing participatory performance project and the dramaturgical method developed in their making. According to Simon Jones, while PaR involves a mixing of 'all sorts of embodied knowledges and textual practices' (2009: 23), there are no translations of PaR only 'a writing alongside' (in the terms of Matthew Goulish¹⁸) but I would suggest that the writing is not so much alongside as essentially entangled with (in the terms of Sarah Nuttall¹⁹). Second, it is engaged with PaR in the sense, as I shall argue below, that it utilizes the same methodology of dramaturgy that was developed in the PaR project for the making of the productions as the methodology for the making of the thesis. For this reason I would suggest that an outline of PaR as a methodology would be appropriate here.

This chapter then sets out (i) to outline my understanding of PaR as a research paradigm, (ii) to describe in the first instance the methodology of dramaturgy developed to produce the productions, (iii) to argue how this methodology was set to use in analyzing the dramaturgical products for the thesis.

PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH

In the recent past a number of book publications have appeared dealing with the idea of Practice or Performance as Research (PaR) (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Allegue,

¹⁷ There is little agreement over terminology for this kind of activity. While Performance as Research is the accepted term in certain jurisdictions and the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) working group on the subject is called the Performance as Research Working Group, other jurisdictions and groupings prefer Practice as Research. Still others suggest that Practice/Performance-led Research is preferable. In my view these terms all refer, to a lesser or greater extent, to the same idea or set of practices.

¹⁸ See Goulish, M. (2000). Also cited in Jones, 2009: 'one's attempt to know [performance] by way of writing is doomed to failure; [...] This writing *alongside* is then only ever a drawing attention to, a pointing *toward*, or a projecting away from' (26, emphasis in original).

¹⁹ See Nuttall, S. (2009).

2009; Riley & Hunter, 2009; Smith & Dean, 2009). This highlights, I believe, a growing interest in the concept as well as its heterogeneity and complexity. In other words, while more and more, scholars are claiming it as a method of research, there are more and more attempts underway to determine exactly what it is and there are often differences in understanding between different contexts and between individual practitioners.

Despite these differences, and while accepting that at this juncture, definitions of PaR are at best provisional, it is generally accepted that what we are concerned with here is: research that is carried out through or by means of performance; using methodologies and specific methods familiar to performance practitioners; and where the output is at least in part, if not entirely, presented through performance. In other words, such activity suggests that there are certain epistemological issues that can only be addressed in and through performance itself and that such performance practice 'can be both a form of research and a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available'. Furthermore, there is '[n]o necessary connection ... assumed between the apparatus of research and the written word' (Painter, 1996: n.p.).

In a recently published article, Baz Kershaw notes that 'practice as research' has by the end of this decade become 'a well-established approach to using creative performance as a method of inquiry in universities in the UK, Australia, Canada, Scandinavia, South Africa and elsewhere' and that this placing of 'creativity at the heart of research implies a paradigm shift, through which established ontologies and epistemologies of research in arts-related disciplines potentially could be radically undone' (2009: 105).

Simon Jones points out in another recent article (sub-titled *Practice as Research as a Paradigm Shift in Performance Studies*), 'the term paradigm is taken from Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*' where it is defined as being 'sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity' while simultaneously being 'sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve' (Kuhn, 1962: 10, cited in Jones, 2009: 19).

My particular ideas on PaR have developed within my own institutional context in South Africa, which, while having connections with the global academic mainstream, has been sufficiently isolated in the recent past so as to create interesting spaces for experimentation. However, such ideas have developed with particular reference to the PARIP process in the United Kingdom (2001-2005)²⁰ and more recently (since 2006) in discussion with colleagues in the Performance as Research Working Group of the IFTR that I would describe in Kuhn's terms as a 'redefined group of practitioners' engaged in attempting to resolve a set of problems arising from the idea of performance as a mode of research, problems that are both ontological and epistemological. These include issues of knowledge types, aesthetic values, contextual responsiveness, practice/theory problematics, questions of how to best present PaR in conference contexts, debates about different types of reflexivity appropriate to Performance as Research and so on.²¹ What follows here is my specific understanding of PaR developed through my own practice and teaching and through discussions with colleagues in the working group.

I begin with the proposition (1) that performance as research is a series of embodied repetitions, (2) in time, (3) on both micro (of bodies, movements, sounds, improvisations, moments) and macro (of events, productions, projects, installations) levels, (4) in search of difference. I will consider this proposition briefly below in terms of Bergson's notion of 'creative evolution' and Deleuze's engagement with it.

In my project, four different productions were created between 2002 and 2007 based on research done on four sites of memory in and around the city of Cape Town. Each production was different in form but followed the same basic making process that became more and more refined and conscious over time.

Production 1 – Production 2 – Production 3 – Production 4.

²⁰ *Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP)* was a five-year project headed by Baz Kershaw and the Department of Drama at the University of Bristol and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. Its objectives were 'to investigate creative-academic issues raised by practice as research, where performance is defined ... as performance media: theatre, dance, film, video and television' (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/introduction.htm>).

²¹ Information available at https://www.firt-iftr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=3&lang=en

In the case of the fifth performance event, the participatory Clanwilliam Arts Project, a similar repetitive sequence arises, but in that case as:

Year 1 – Year 2 – Year 3 – Year 4 through to the current Year 11.

Standing on this side looking back at these repetitions I hear myself calling them a series, like *The Sopranos* or *CSI* perhaps. But a series implies that I knew what I was embarking on at the beginning and then played it out one episode at a time. But I did not. I knew what I wanted to do in that moment with that first production when it started and it was not to create a series. So why the repetitions? Why the compulsion to return over and over to the same thing, to do it again and again, in this way and that way, with this content and that content? Am I under an illusion that if I repeat the same thing more often it will gain in value or weight; that it will be taken more seriously? Or are there really differences in this sameness? And if so, what is the nature of these differences and where do they lie: in the repetitions or in the spaces in between? And, is there a point at which the unleashing of differences is exhausted and I am compulsively repeating what is already known and experienced, or is it just me that is exhausted, unable or unwilling to go on repeating in this way? And does it make a difference? This embodied repetition in time. Is there an ethical or political dimension to working in this way, with the body, over time, again and again and in an institutional context designed to at best demean and at worst disqualify and discipline this way of working?

According to Keith Ansell Pearson: 'Deleuze conceived a thinking of difference and repetition as historically specific to capitalist modernity' (1999: 4). For Pearson, Deleuze's project is an attempt to reinvent this modernity and articulate a radical project for philosophy, through Bergson (2). I would suggest that through Bergson and then Deleuze we can begin to understand the difference of performance as a mode of research, its refusal of binaries (body-mind, theory-practice, space-time, subject-object), its radical openness, its multiplicities, its unrepresentability, its destabilization of all pretensions to fixity and determination.

For Bergson, time is not a series of instants but an experienced duration – 'the continuation of what no longer exists into what does exist' (1922/1965: 49) or

‘the continuous progress of the past which grows into the future and which swells as it advances’ (1907/1944: 7). When Bergson speaks of duration he does not refer to the realm of things or distinct entities (‘things and states’) but to a realm of creative processes and becomings (‘changes and acts’) (270). He is in Pearson’s words less interested in ‘the thing produced’ than in the ‘activity of evolution itself’, the infinite capacity for inventive novelty (Pearson, 1999: 44). But this realm of creative processes and becomings is not an abstraction for Bergson; it is a form of practiced embodiment close to the everyday life-world (Linstead & Mullarkey, 2003: 4).

This idea of duration informs Bergson’s notion of ‘creative evolution’. In his book, *Creative Evolution* (1907/1944), Bergson rejects both neo-Darwinian mechanism in which evolution is driven by a pre-existent model or latent code that plays itself out mechanistically over time (a compulsion of the past), and neo-Lamarckian finalism in which evolution works towards a perfect form achieved at the ‘end’ (the attraction of the future). Instead he suggests that evolution is a process of constant invention (a series of explosions) in which contingency plays a significant role. For evolution to take place requires only two things: an accumulation of energy and an ‘elastic canalization of this energy in variable and indeterminable directions’ (1907/1944: 278). For Bergson, we cannot know where we are going to until we have got there, for as Pearson summarizes it:

Only once the road has been traveled is the intellect able to mark its direction and judge that where it has got to is where it was going all along. But this is no more than a deception since ‘the road has been created *pari passu* with the act of traveling over it, being nothing but the direction of the act itself’ (1962: 51). (Pearson 1999: 44)²²

This process of creative evolution is for Bergson, ‘a continual invention of forms ever new’, a ceaseless string of invention and reinvention (1907/1944: 374). The ethical project is for Bergson to learn to live in duration - ‘It is no use trying to approach duration: we must install ourselves within it straight away’ (325).

Deleuze (later with Guattari) builds on Bergson in a number of key ways as he transforms creative evolution into ‘creative involution’, a concept that must be

²² The reference to Bergson in the quotation is to the 1962 French edition of *L’Évolution Créatrice* (*Creative Evolution*). Paris: PUF.

distinguished from any association with regression or a movement to a state of less differentiation or the exhaustion of differentiation – ‘Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987: 238).

In summary, Deleuze and Guattari achieves this firstly by bringing creative evolution into relationship with the ‘non-evolutionist idea of transversal communication’ emphasizing the non-genealogical, non-filiative nature of creative evolution and stressing instead change occurring across phyletic lineages (Pearson, 1999: 162). In other words they counter the progressivist and perfectionist ideas of evolution with the notion of transversal ‘becomings’. Secondly, they argue that such becomings ‘involve neither the development of forms nor the constitution of substances and subjects but rather modes of individuation that precede the subject or the organism’. These modes of individuation exist on a different level, a ‘plane of immanence’ consisting of ‘abstract’ and ‘non-formal’ elements, intensities and qualities, ‘relations of speed and slowness’, affective variations etc. (Pearson, 1999: 159).²³ In other words change or difference occurs at the molecular level not at what they call the ‘molar’ level of formations and structures. Thirdly, Deleuze and Guattari stress the surplus value of any code and its capacity for free variation. In other words it is through excess, through surplus, through the accidental and unexpected that difference emerges. These surpluses are engaged in ‘side communication’ involving heterogeneous populations and ‘machinic assemblages’ that evolve through recurrence, in unexpected mutations and ‘monstrous couplings’ (Pearson, 1999: 151 and 159).²⁴

So what does this mean for PaR? I would argue that the PaR project is a process of creative evolution. It is not progressivist building towards a finality; nor is it mechanistic in the sense that it knows what it is searching for before it begins searching. It begins with energy (an impulse, an idea, an intuition, a hunch) that is then channeled, durationally, through repetition, in variable and indeterminable directions; a series of unexpected and often accidental explosions which in turn lead to further explosions. It expresses itself through a repeated

²³ For a more detailed exposition of the ‘plane of immanence’ see Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994: 35-60.

²⁴ In this they are heavily influenced by the work of Francois Jacob, biologist and Nobel Prize winner.

though flexible and open-ended process of ontogenesis. It is not, as Gregory Bateson would say, 'bounded by ... skin but includes all external pathways along which information can travel' (1987: 231). In fact I would argue that it does have some kind of membrane around it that is perceptible in retrospect and establishes a 'territory', but that such a membrane is always elastic and porous. This is in line with Deleuze and Guattari who, despite arguing for 'open systems' and 'deterritorialization', emphasize that limits always exist and play an important part in any process of 'creative evolution'. This is because 'the territory does not merely isolate and join but opens onto ... forces that arise from within or come from outside, and renders their effect ... perceptible' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994: 185-6). In other words, while creative evolution does lead to some degree of individuation and closure, such closure is always in communication with an outside that includes Bateson's multiple 'external pathways', through a variety of means that Bergson identifies as 'musical': 'created by modulation, repetition, transposition, juxtaposition' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994: 190).

So to return to my project, if there is difference arising from the successive iterations it is not occurring serially in the individual representations as a set of connectable points. Rather it is occurring in the 'middle' as a process of inventive becoming and 'becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin or destination ... [it] is neither one nor two nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight' that runs perpendicular to both (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987: 293). Furthermore, it is not occurring at the level of the formation itself, at the level of the individual production or representation (perceptible through reflection), it is occurring at the molecular level of its process of production as changes or shifts in intensities or qualities (perceptible only by living through the duration of the process). In other words this difference is not something to be looked at from a position outside and after the fact, like a text to be read, it must be experienced from within a durational process of continuous and multiple becoming in which the perceiver is also in a state of emergence. But the difference, the changes, the continuous inventions and variations are occurring at what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'absolute speed of movement' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987: 293), like a squealing mosquito audibly present but not quite

visible or easily graspable, or the train in Zola's *La Bête Humaine* (1890) that Deleuze refers to as a part of his discussion of 'the crack' in *The Logic of Sense* (1969/2004: 359-62): 'hurtling towards the future with mathematical rigour, determinedly oblivious to the rest of human life on either side' (Cited in Pearson 1999: 116). For Deleuze and Guattari:

Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. [...] Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception. (1980/1987: 281)

If the 'event' of PaR is a runaway train, beyond the 'threshold of perception', and if the researcher is hanging on trying desperately to make sense of it, or trailing behind trying desperately to catch up, then how do we make the knowledge of the event conscious? How do we make it visible to ourselves and to others? If PaR is anything, it is the desire to make conscious, to become aware from within the midst of the endless process of becoming and then to attempt to translate this for others through a variety of modalities. This requires a kind of perceptual still point, a slowing down or thickening of the ongoing, of the flow, so as to surface the differences in the spaces in-between.

My suggestion is that repetition is the apparatus by which we achieve this slowing down. Repetition is an attempt to trip us up, to stop somehow the onward flow or at least to interrupt it, to slow it down so as to allow us to grasp it even if only fleetingly. Nadia Seremetakis describes it as 'discontinuous punctures, that render the imperceptible perceptible as they produce marked moments – tidal pools where an experiential cosmos can be marked out in miniature' (1994: 12). For André Lepecki, discussing the repetition inherent in the work of choreographer Jerome Bel: 'Repetition creates a form of standing still that has nothing of the immobile' about it. He characterizes such repetition as 'paranomasia', a rhetorical form in which an idea is developed linguistically through stringing together words that share the same stem. He argues that: 'repetition with a difference performs a reiterative spacing of the idea, allowing for a specific kind of slow turning that gives "intellectual objects" variation and hence shifts their aspects or appearances' (2006: 62).

But however much repetition might slow things down it never exhausts the capacity for difference. It continues to produce difference on a molecular level as long as it repeats and even after it has finished repeating, in the repetition of its traces – ‘the mobile flies forever before the pursuit of science’ (Bergson, 1907/1944: 327). It is us who struggle to keep up, to keep trying to bring things to consciousness, to keep failing to translate for others. It is us who become exhausted and who draw a line underneath the project and say enough.

But just because it is difficult to imagine how to ‘think true duration’, how to stay focused on the ‘movement going on’ (the flux/flow) rather than on the ‘movement accomplished’ (the final form or representation) (325), is not an excuse for not trying or a reason for disqualifying the activity. What is required is a willingness to continue to engage with the task, to create the conditions for seeing from within duration where all is movement and change. This is what lies at the heart of the project we are engaged with here.

THE DRAMATURGICAL METHOD

My work in the particular project of this thesis proceeds from De Certeau’s notion that history is not the objects in the archive; the material traces. It is what is done with them or on them, through operations/practices (De Certeau, 1975/1988: 20; Ahearne, 1995: 22). The specific practice here is what I call dramaturgy.

There is no clear agreement amongst scholars as to what in fact dramaturgy is or what it refers to. According to Mary Luckhurst (2006) there are two main senses in which the word dramaturgy is generally employed. In the first sense it ‘relates to the internal structure of a play text and is concerned with the arrangement of formal elements by the playwright’, and in the second sense it refers to ‘external elements relating to staging, the overall artistic concept behind the staging, the politics of performance, and the calculated manipulation of audience responses’ (10-11). She goes on to say that both these senses of the word ‘signal the articulation of process which may explain why the meaning of *dramaturgy* is so (bitterly) contested’ (11, emphasis in original).

Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt (2007) define dramaturgy as ‘the composition of a work’ but also ‘a word applied to the *discussion* of that composition’ (4, emphasis in original). They also draw attention to the changing nature of dramaturgies that are less connected to written scripts and more to the performance existing independently of the script and to other kinds of ‘theatre and performance makers whose work provokes or suggests new compositional strategies’ that do not begin with written texts (6). They touch on a whole host of ways in which dramaturges are engaging contemporary theatre and performance practices and a whole host of dramaturgies that arise in and through that work.

Marianne van Kerkhoven in her introduction to *Theaterschrift 5-6: On dramaturgy* (1994), draws attention to the collaborative and processual nature of dramaturgy:

One of the fundamental characteristics of what we call today ‘new dramaturgy’ is precisely the choice of a process-oriented method of working; the meaning, the intentions, the form and the substance of a play arise during the working process, so that the actors often also make a great contribution by means of the material they supply during the rehearsals. This material can be in the form of text, of course, but may also be images, sounds, movements, etc. (18)

The word dramaturgy itself can be traced back to the classical Greek word *dramatourgia* that refers to the structure of a play, particularly a tragedy. It ‘describes the organization of formal elements in a tragedy, the structural composition of action into a dramatically cohesive whole’ (Luckhurst, 2006: 5). Its use in the modern theatre is focused on Europe and particularly on Germany and it has only much more recently – from about the 1960s - found its way into English-language theatre in the UK, Australia and the USA. A quick survey of its history would begin with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1769), a collection of critical essays reflecting on play composition, structure, acting and audience in which he reveals the mechanics of dramatic structure and demonstrates its modes of operation. It would then jump to the mid-20th century work of Bertolt Brecht who focused attention on context as the most crucial aspect of the dramaturgy and central to the composition itself. For Brecht, context was the motor or generator of debate and action in a theatre directed towards the transformation of society. According to Turner and Behrndt, Brecht’s dramaturgy

was also closely connected to adaptation and the 'dialogic, or indeed, dialectical relationship with other playwrights, through strategies of adaptation and assimilation' (2007: 43). More recently, Eugenio Barba (1985) has defined dramaturgy as a 'weave':

The word text, before referring to a written or spoken, printed or manuscript text meant a weaving together. In this sense, there is no performance without text. That which concerns the text (the weave) of the performance can be defined as dramaturgy. (75)

Dramaturgy for Barba includes all aspects of performance, 'sound, lights, changes in space'. Actions in the theatre 'come into play only when they weave together, when they become [performance] text' (76). The weave is not an object; it is a process - a process of being undecided, always in emergence. It is a refusal of and resistance to closure – to accepting conventional notions and norms of what theatre or performance might be.

My particular use of the term focuses less on the structure of a written text and more on what Luckhurst defines as 'the business of creation, the actual construction of text and theatre at their most practical level' (2006: 11). In my work dramaturgy is understood as the making of new works for performance. In all of my projects I am credited with being the director but I always feel more comfortable with the idea that they are pieces I write, with other bodies, in space. The role of the dramaturge here is part pedagogical, part facilitatory, and part authorial. It involves the employment of particular tools and methods in acts of gathering, generating, guiding, advising and shaping. In other words I assist in the making of content and the weaving of form.

Dramaturgy is a thing - an end product - the particular compositional logic of the work created. It is a relationship between a subject matter, its framing and the particular context in which it occurs. But dramaturgy is also the process of getting there, the multiple conversations, interactions and exercises that lead to that end product.

In all four productions in the series and in the participatory project in Clanwilliam, dramaturgy and the performance it makes and makes use of, is put to work on what remains from the past. It reflects, comments on and re-imagines the

historical and memorial processes at work in South African society during critical junctures of our social transformation.

My particular conceptual approach to dramaturgy is based on the idea of 'dwelling', a term borrowed from the anthropologist, Tim Ingold. Tim Ingold's work on dwelling proceeds from a question posed by Heidegger (1946/1971) on the difference between building and dwelling. The answer has for a long time been that we build in order to dwell, that buildings are containers to live in. This leads to what Ingold calls the building perspective: 'worlds are made before they are lived in' (2000: 179).

This perspective depends on an essential division between the perceiver and the world, 'such that the perceiver has to reconstruct the world, in the mind, prior to any meaningful engagement with it' (178). So in our world, houses are designed in the mind before they are built (by us or for us, by others).

Ingold's dwelling perspective poses an alternative:

[T]he forms people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagements in their surroundings. [...] People do not import their ideas, plans or mental representations into the world, since that very world, to borrow a phrase from Merleau-Ponty (1962: 24), is the homeland of their thoughts. Only because they already dwell therein can they think the thoughts they do. (186)²⁵

The dwelling perspective does not, therefore, separate the perceiver from the world. Its point of departure is the body-in-the-world. We build forms, not as a consequence of having had thoughts but as a consequence of dwelling, of being in the world, of being in action. And one kind of action we take whilst dwelling, one among many, is 'taking thought' (Whitehead, 1938: 217) or imagining ways of meeting our needs. 'In the process of dwelling we build' (Ingold, 2000: 188).

Ingold argues further, that from the dwelling perspective, 'landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves'. When we dwell in the landscape, we dwell amongst what is already there and because of what is already there. When we dwell in the landscape we

²⁵ The reference to Merleau-Ponty is to the *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945/1962.

remember, which in this sense means 'to engage perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past' (189).

From the Western perspective, when we perceive an environment we construct a view which leads to one particular meaning of the word landscape. This perspective is from the outside looking in or from afar looking at the world that is something other than ourselves. From an alternative perspective, a perspective Ingold derives from his study of hunter-gatherer societies, we perceive an environment by engaging with it, 'moving about in it, exploring it, attending to it, ever alert to the signs by which it is revealed' (55); by adopting a view from within it. This perspective is from the inside and exists in active relation to parts of the landscape other than ourselves, but our selves are not separate from the landscape or to those other parts: we are our body-in-the-landscape. This is a very different sense of landscape.

In the current project, my dramaturgical method involves locating myself within the landscape of a particular 'site of memory' that is pregnant with a particular past. It involves adopting a view from within this landscape, paying close attention and involving myself and others I work with in an active, participatory, embodied way. I don't build a structure in order that the performance might dwell therein. I dwell in the landscape over time in order to learn *how* to build there. It is not a case of building a container in the mind and then filling it. It is a case of allowing the living itself to reveal the right container. This is a methodological approach that reverses the cognitive model. It is not a Cartesian thinking to effect being; it is an incarnated, participatory being developing thought through creative discovery and paying attention to the landscape.²⁶

In his monumental work *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur (2000/2004), building on De Certeau, describes the historiographical operation as consisting of three phases:

²⁶ In this sense it is aligned with Whitehead's conception that 'we cannot think first and act afterwards. From the moment of birth we are immersed in action, and can only fitfully guide it by taking thought. We have, therefore, in various spheres of experience to adapt those ideas which seem to work within those spheres' (1938: 217).

- The first phase he terms the documentary phase. It runs from the declaration of eyewitnesses to the constituting of archives and ultimately their consultation. It takes as its epistemological program the establishing of documentary proof.
- The second phase he terms explanation/understanding. It is the phase in which the researcher puts questions to the documents in the archive seeking the multiple uses of the connective 'because' responding to the question 'why?': Why did things happen like that and not otherwise?
- The third phase he terms the representative phase. It concerns the putting into literary or written form of discourse offered to the readers of history.

(136)

These three phases are not meant to be seen as 'distinct chronological stages, but of methodological moments, interwoven with one another' (137). The process of making all the productions that constitute my study aligns to a greater or lesser extent to this triadic structure and I would define the methodological phases in my work as follows:

Phase 1 – Archival Research

Each project begins with an extended process of research working with primary sources in the archive, and with secondary sources, the studies conducted by historians and archaeologists who have worked on each particular 'site'.

When one dwells in the landscape of a site or an archive, one encounters its content, that which it contains, but one also comes face-to-face with the logic of its construction, its rules of inclusion and exclusion. 'Archive as much as you like, something will always be left out', Pierre Nora declares (1989: 14). One of the particular focuses of my project is to uncover subjugated histories; to identify what has been left out or what can only be inferred.

The work at this stage involves gathering traces or fragments, because as Nadia Seremetakis reminds us, the memory of the past comes to us in pieces, it does not show itself all at once, in wholes (2000: 310). These fragments include documentary traces: the deposed testimony of eyewitnesses, the records created by those who are 'witnesses despite themselves'²⁷ and images passed down from previous times, paintings, drawings, etchings, photographs and cinematic records. They also include material traces, the kinds of fragments usually dealt with by archaeologists, shards of pottery, old coins, furniture, clothing, architectural remains.

For Marc Bloch (1949/1964) all are testimonies, either written or unwritten and all are equally unreliable demanding a critical reading on the part of the historian.²⁸ For Carlo Ginzburg (1986/1989) there are testimonies and there are clues. Ricoeur sees Ginzburg setting up 'a dialectic of clue and testimony internal to the notion of trace and thereby to give the concept of document its full scope'. The testimonies testify through written words; the clues "'testify" through their muteness' (Ricoeur, 2000/2004: 174). Ginzburg proposes a 'conjectural paradigm' that involves using clues to penetrate the opaque surface of reality (1986/1989: 123). These clues must be read symptomatically, a practice that Ginzburg argues originates in tracking and divination, passes on to medical diagnostics, appears in detective stories and forensics and of course in psychoanalysis and ultimately forms the basis of all semiotics. In fact, the practice of reading symptomatically is present wherever there is a need to surface what is hidden from view; our subjugated histories.

Ingold also refers to clues in discussing the ways in which novices are called to pay attention to aspects of their environment.²⁹ In his discussion he distinguishes

²⁷ The notion of 'witnesses in spite of themselves' or 'involuntary witnesses' refers to those who create records of some aspect of society in one period that become a testimony in another period without this being the intention of the 'witness' (Ricoeur, 2000/2004: 170 -171). Bloch argues that 'in the course of its development, historical research has gradually been led to place more and more confidence in ... the evidence of witnesses in spite of themselves' (1949/1964: 61).

²⁸ Bloch acknowledges the unwritten traces referring to them as 'vestiges of the past' (1949/1964: 53) but deals with them in far less detail and complexity than he does with the written traces.

²⁹ The idea of an 'education of attention' passed on from generation to generation is taken from James Gibson (1979: 254).

between clues and ciphers. He suggests that in attempting to discover the meanings inherent in the environment, the novice is:

provided with a set of keys ... not as ciphers but as *clues*. Whereas the cipher is centrifugal, allowing the novice to access meanings that are attached ('pinned on') by the mind to the outer surface of the world, the clue is centripetal, guiding him towards meanings that lie at the heart of the world itself, but which are normally hidden behind the façade of superficial appearances. The contrast between the key as cipher and the key as clue corresponds to the critical distinction ... between decoding and revelation. (2000: 22, emphasis in original)

In this sense, meaning does not cloak or cover the world – 'multiple layers of symbolic meaning or cultural representation ... deposited upon it' (Cosgrove, 1989: 120-7). Rather, it is to be discovered *in* the world, in relation to specific features of the landscape. The task of discovery is not one of interpretation of layers of representation (decoding) but of probing ever more deeply into the landscape in order to discover what meanings are there to be found (revelation). 'Meaning is there to be *discovered* in the landscape, if only we know how to attend to it. Every feature ... is a potential clue, a key to meaning rather than a vehicle for carrying it' (Ingold, 2000: 208, emphasis in original). It is important however to stress that the meanings that are discovered in the landscape are both plural and partial not singular or absolute.

Each site, each archive in this study is a landscape the features of which are fragments that remain from the past. The work of this first phase involves foraging in the landscape for particular fragments that might act as keys or clues. My primary concern in this first phase is to gather fragments that shed light on key aspects of a particular site but that also suggest a particularly bodily or kinetic trace. The focus on the body is central to all the work. The body in space is the starting point of the creative process and the body is the primary agent of exploration and expression with a concurrent devaluation of the 'text' as point of origin and authority. This body-centered approach draws from Artaud's theatre of the phenomenal body in which the function of the body 'is not to identify layers of signification within operative cultures (i.e. the domain of semiotics) but to aim to discover "language beyond words", a metaphysics of the theatre via an immersion in the physical'

(Sanchez-Colberg, 1996: 43).³⁰ Artaud writes of the stage as a 'tangible, physical space' to be filled by its own 'concrete language' (1938/1970: 27):

aimed at the senses and independent of speech [...]. There must be poetry for the senses just as there is for speech, but this physical, tangible language ... is really only theatrical in as far as the thoughts it expresses escape spoken language. (1938/1970: 27)

This search for expression that 'escape[s] spoken language' is precisely at the heart of the current study the aim of which is not only to find images in the present for what has passed but to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways.

My secondary concern in this first phase is to identify a principle or logic to guide 'emplotment', Ricouer's term for the 'grasping together' or configuration of a series of disparate events into a discursive whole that says more than what the individual parts say on their own.³¹ I will come back to this idea of emplotment further on.

Phase 2 – Dwelling

The second phase of work begins by exposing performer-collaborators to the collected material and the broad territory. They need to find their way into the landscape and then they need to position themselves within. This is achieved through workshops, lectures, tours to physical sites, video documentaries, whatever is available.

Next, a repertoire of dramaturgical tools and methods, gathered and developed over time, are used to work on the fragments. It is a kind of forensic archaeology performed by the body interacting with a fragment. What we hope to do is to prise open the fragments to reveal meaning rather than to interpret a

³⁰ The body-space nexus as point of origin can also be traced to the work of Rudolf Laban. According to Sanchez-Colberg, 'In Laban's work the central guiding premise is that of the "body in space". Before there is movement, there is a body in space – a body that has orientation, dimensions, inclination, that by virtue of just existing occupies and produces space. Movement follows from this first principle' (1996: 44). This idea can also be found in the work of Henri Lefebvre in his *The Production of Space* (1974/1991): 'Before *producing effects* in the material world ... before *producing itself* by drawing nourishment from that realm, and before *reproducing itself* by generating other bodies, each living body is space and has its space' (170, emphasis in original).

³¹ See Paul Ricouer (1983/1984: 41-42 and 53-54) for more detail on 'emplotment' as 'a grasping together' of disparate elements into a narrative whole a concept he derives from Louis O. Mink.

meaning 'pinned on' to the outside of the fragment. The intention is to create what De Certeau calls a 'breach in the text' through which:

the voice exiled on the borders of discourse, might flow back, and with it, the murmur and the 'noises' from which the process of scriptural reproduction distinguishes itself. In this way an exteriority without beginning or truth might return to visit discourse. (De Certeau, 1975/1988: 236)

At the heart of the work in this phase is improvisation a practice I dealt with in some detail in my MA dissertation on *Workshop Theatre in South Africa in the 1980s* (Fleishman, 1991). There I defined the transactional unit of improvisation as one that begins with a proposition that invites a response out of which arises a consequence. In turn the consequence becomes a new proposition that invites a new response and so on. The Proposition-Response-Consequence combination is therefore the basic building block of theatrical improvisation.

Western discourse around improvisation centres on the concept of 'spontaneity' – the removal of all blocks or impediments to responding immediately in the moment – and the idea of 'remaining in the present' (Spolin, 1963; Hodgson and Richards, 1966; Johnstone, 1981 and 1999; Steinman, 1986; Frost and Yarrow, 1990; Johnston, 2006). Much emphasis is placed on not predetermining the outcome, not deciding on a 'text' and then setting out to realise it in the improvisation but rather on responding as truthfully as possible to the proposition in the present moment.

Traditions other than the Western and particularly oral traditions in which improvisation plays an essential role – performances are composed in the moment of performance – don't quite see it in this way. In these traditions, improvisation involves a play or dialogue between certain core elements of the existing tradition and the spontaneity of the moment. The performer engages with the specifics of the environment – the context, the space, the audience – and these determine the particular innovations of the tradition in each particular performance event.

My own current thinking on theatrical improvisation is more influenced by this latter way of thinking. This is also to some extent supported by neurological research, particularly by Antonio Damasio, on our perception of the world around us (1995 and 2003). The improviser responds to propositions in the present moment -

what Damasio calls 'perceptual images' (1995: 96) - originating in the archival fragments, in the other performers, in the space. At the same time, however, the improviser is also engaged with what has been discovered at earlier stages of the research - what Damasio calls 'recalled images' (1995: 97). The process of improvisation thus involves a relationship between these two sets of images in what Shannon Rose Riley (2004) describes as 'an intentional process of layering'. She goes on to argue that in such a process:

attention is not split so much as layered and in a state of ongoing dialogue and change. [...] [E]mbodied processes focus on becoming attentive to recalled images and their dialogical relationship with perceptual imagery offering the actor a method for becoming attuned to the polyphonic connections between body and brain, organism and environment. (454)

This highlights the particularly embodied and sensory nature of the improvisational process and brings us back to Ingold's notion that we perceive the environment through active, embodied attention and participation from which thought arises; we don't think our way into the environment.

The physical exploration of the fragments begins in silence.³² The relationship is between the body and what is suggested by the fragment, how it speaks itself to the body. Slowly a sounding might begin, sound as an extension of physicality. Only later does the quoting of documentary fragments find its way in and right at the end music is fed in to dialogue with what has been discovered, music that has been composed in parallel according to its own independent research process.

As the improvisational work proceeds, I dwell in the changing landscape paying attention to the images the performer-collaborators produce, seeking out

³² All improvisation and all performance for that matter begin in silence. In fact, moments of silence punctuate the subtle shifts of action throughout a performance. This silence is not empty, however, it is full of potential energy waiting to become kinetic, to burst into action at one or another level. According to Eugenio Barba, 'the Greek word *enérgeia* means [...] : to be ready for action, on the verge of producing work' (1993/1995: 55). Grotowski describes it as pre-movement: 'a kind of silence before the movement, a silence which is filled with potential or can occur as a stop of the action at a precise moment' (1991: 268). Meyerhold refers to it as *predigra* or pre-acting: 'the element that accumulates, develops and waits to be resolved' (cited in Barba, 1993/1995: 56). Silence is often referred to as stillness, a kind of mobility in immobility. In Chinese opera it is referred to as *liang xiang* – a stop at a moment of heightened energy and in a position of precarious balance and then a move in a surprisingly new direction. One opera master has translated it as: 'Movement stop, Inside no stop!' (cited in Barba, 1993/1995: 58). For Lecoq the improvising performer must achieve a state of *disponibilité*, best translated as a state of readiness, of being available to act. The above resonates with the notion of an *articulate* silence and its insistent demand for utterance referred to by Jonker above.

what I call second-order fragments, bits and pieces of performance material that re-imagine, reflect on, uncover and reveal the archival fragment in interesting ways and then feeding that back into the performers' work. By paying attention to these fragments I am beginning to select, to make choices. This paying of attention doesn't only reveal content it also starts to reveal form. A shape for the fragments begins to emerge from within the landscape.

The above process results in a collection of compound images, compound because they consist of layers of physical, vocal and musical gestures but also because, although they primarily refer back to the past, embedded in them are flashes, moments, fleeting gestures of what the past has become in the present. And these anachronistic moments have a certain disobedient playfulness about them that unsettles the overall reading of the images. This deliberate insertion of 'play' achieves what Ermarth refers to as 'the elasticity in a line that is not pulled taut, of the flexibility in a system that can also include its capacity to permit substitutions even to the point of shifting the balance of its so-called structure' (1992: 146). For Derrida (1967/1978), play is what distinguishes a living system from a dead system and must be seen in opposition to all attempts at structuring that have as their goal the limitation of play. Central to this notion is the idea of 'supplementarity' derived from De Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1906-1911/1966). As Ermarth puts it with reference to Derrida, 'supplementarity' is:

the process whereby a fixed system or syntax is perpetually renewed by the necessity of substitution: substitution of one term, one experiment, one improvisation after another as dictated by some irreducible ambiguity in the system of signs. (1992: 148)

It must be emphasized that these compound images are not re-enactments of the past, they are re-creations, refigurations of what remains from the past. Their relationship with the past is sometimes metaphorical, sometimes metonymical but never simply imitative.

Phase 3 – Emplotment

In this phase the images selected are emplotted, woven together into the final representative form to be shown to the audience.

For Paul Ricoeur the configuration or ‘grasping together’ of disparate events into some form of narrative ‘effect[s] a mediation between the events and certain universally human “experiences of temporality”’ (White, 1987: 173). In other words there is a meaning inherent in the emplotment that is separate from the meaning of the individual parts, and that meaning or ‘content of the form’ to quote Hayden White, concerns our human sense of being in time and the complexities thereof.

The emplotment places the images in time, both the time of the performance itself, its duration, but also the linking of the time of the past to the time of the future so that the present, the moment in which we perform or watch, is a transition between the incomplete projects of the past and the yet to be fulfilled projects of the future. But the present cannot just be a passage for historical processes, for the uninterrupted flow of ‘historical time’.³³ It must be a site of engagement. It is in the present that we play at assemblage, that we generate possibilities through the adventure of experimenting and improvising with fragments from the past and what we make of them in the present through the act of dwelling.

DRAMATURGY AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The dramaturgical method of dwelling described above and employed in making the productions and projects is not limited to that domain (the domain of production). I would argue that the dramaturgical method of dwelling is also the method by which the thesis itself is constructed. From this it would follow that to conduct the study, to engage with the work produced, is to dwell in the landscape of that work, paying attention to its features, alert to the signs by which it reveals itself. This means

³³ As Elizabeth Ermarth shows historical time is not a given, it is produced. It is equivalent to the kind of space produced by the Quattrocento: the system of single-point perspective developed by Renaissance painters. It coordinates ‘past, present and future – and by implication all the possible viewpoints contained therein – into a single system of measurement [and thereby] organizes ... the faculty of consciousness in much the same way that realist painting rationalizes the faculty of sight’ (2004: 66). The result is an objective view of the world, regardless of perspective, of the particular location of each spectator.

adopting a view from the inside, a position that is not detached from the landscape but is a part of it, and then, as a consequence of this dwelling in the landscape, to 'take thought'.

But *53 Degrees*, *Onnest'bo*, *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* and *Cargo* don't exist. They are merely titles pointing to experiences that must be brought into being through the collective efforts of performers and audiences. Each, like the sites they focus on, is an absence that must be made present, in this case through performance. So what happens when the pieces are not performed any longer, when they have passed away? What landscape exists to dwell in? What remains when performance is no more?

Fragments remain:

Theatre programmes, brochures, leaflets, photographs, video and sound recordings, press releases and cuttings of reviews, details of marketing strategies, figures for ticket sales, contracts with performers and confidential budgets, correspondence, details of sponsorship arrangements, venue plans, set and costume designs, stage and lighting plans, production notes, annotated scripts, interviews with directors or actors, actual costumes and examples of stage properties, and so on, and so on. (Reason, 2003: 83)

These are the things of the archive, the supposedly enduring material remains of performance, and to dwell in the landscape of what remains from my productions means to engage with them to some degree and in some manner.

However, there are also the immaterial remains of performance, that which lives on in the minds and bodies of participants and spectators over time: 'the anecdotes and analects of shared experiences as collective memories within an oral culture' (Pearson & Shanks, 2001: 5). These are the other ways in which performance remains but 'remains differently' (Schneider, 2001: 101). These memories are not of the archive. They cannot be detached from the body of he/she/them who remember/s - '[T]he signifier cannot be detached from the individual or collective body' (De Certeau, 1975/1988: 216). They are part of what Diana Taylor refers to as the 'so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practices of knowledge' (2003: 19). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett defines the ephemeral as encompassing 'all forms of behaviour – everyday activities, storytelling, ritual, dance, speech, performance of all kinds' (1998: 30) practices that involve body-to-body transmission of knowledge. For Pearson and Shanks, the sites of both performance

and archaeology constitute sensoria : 'loc[i] of experiences ... preserved in the bodies and memories of the varying orders of participants: touch, proximity, texture' (Pearson & Shanks, 2001: 54).

For the purposes of this study, the immaterial remains are embodied in the self – my self - and the process involves a dwelling in the landscape of my memory of the practice and the productions it gave rise to, a remembering that attempts to engage with the fractured body of work created since the project's inception – fractured by the ravages of time and performance's own ontology, the way it becomes itself through disappearance (Phelan, 1993: 146). But how would such a dwelling work? How does one get access to the immaterial remains of performance embodied in the self, and then how does one communicate this experience that is embodied and ephemeral to someone who probably did not experience it themselves? The answer is with difficulty and certainly not in a straightforward manner. Any textual presentation must be an acknowledged act of interpretation and translation that takes into account the limits of any attempt to represent this particular past. It must strive to resist the stultifying effect of traditional writing practices, the way in which the written word tends to rigidify and fix into stable form practices and processes that are essentially unstable and shifting. It needs to emphasise relational patterns over autonomous ones, contradiction and difference over consistency and sameness, and opacity over transparency. A new form of inscription that gives shape to an occluded oral culture battling to emerge from the margins of academia, confronting dominant forms of representation and power and (re)claiming space for itself (Tierney, 1998). As Mary-Louise Pratt argues: 'Such texts often constitute a marginalized group's point of entry into the dominant circuits of print culture' (1991: 35). She is of course writing here about marginalised groups within society broadly, but researchers who are also performing and creative artists often feel themselves in a marginalised position within the academy, a position of always finding oneself portrayed in texts not of one's own making. As such, the form of the thesis as text is as much a part of the method as anything that precedes it.

THE INSERTION OF IMAGES

*"The image/text is neither a method nor a guarantee of historical discovery; it is more like an aperture or cleavage in representation, a place where history might slip through the cracks."
(W.J.T. Mitchell in Picture Theory, 1994: 104).*

*"... that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead."
(Roland Barthes in Camera Lucida, 1980/1981: 7).*

In the chapters that follow I have inserted strips of photographic images from the various productions intermittently through the text.³⁴ The photograph brings us back to time and silence with which we began because according to Quinney, 'The ... photograph give[s] us evidence of time past and time passing. What once existed no longer exists, except in memory, in the viewing of the artifact that is ... photograph' (Quinney, 1996: 381). So the photograph is both evidence of existence and of death; full of energy yet figured by silence and immobility. It is what Peter Wollen describes as fragments of the past preserved like 'flies in amber' (1984: 76). These images inserted between the words are not meant to illustrate points or provide evidence, they constitute a kind of parallel text which is both more material than the word text but also more opaque and illusive.³⁵ They offer the tantalizing possibility of regaining what has passed - what Benjamin terms 'a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past' (1955a/1968: 263) - but in their essentially fragmentary and arrested form they frustrate that possibility. They demand what Benjamin calls 'blasting' which Avery Gordon explains as follows:

Blasting might be conceived as entering through a different door. [...] Through this door a certain kind of search is established, one that often leads along an associative path of correspondences. [...] This path of correspondences is not like the causality associated with social science and related modes that share its basic epistemology: it blasts through the rational, linearly temporal, and discrete spatiality of our conventional notions of cause and effect, past and present, conscious and unconscious. (1997: 66)

³⁴ These are in fact still frames extracted from video documentation of the productions/projects rather than still photographs which exacerbates the sense of arrested action that photographic imagery of performance always suggests.

³⁵ W.J.T. Mitchell points out that in composite texts made up of words and images, 'one can and must ... avoid the trap of comparison'. As he puts it, '*comparison itself is not a necessary procedure in the study of image text relations*', rather in his view we need to pay attention to 'the whole ensemble of *relations* between media, and relations can be many things besides similarity, resemblance and analogy' (1994: 89-90, emphasis in original).

This recalls Roland Barthes's suggestion that we avoid a 'scientific analysis' of photographs in favour of responding to what he terms the 'punctum', the point of sudden and strong emotion embedded in the photograph (1980/1981: 45). It is this *punctum* that has the capacity to call up an off-frame space, a space that 'will never come into the frame, will never be heard – again a death, another form of death' (Metz, 1985: 87).³⁶ This off-frame space is a subjective and projective space that the reader-viewer, faced with the *punctum* of the photograph, must engage with, must dream and imagine to give shape to the emptiness. It is precisely this 'giving shape to emptiness', that my project seeks to achieve.

In a strange way this thesis is like a *yizkher bikher*, a form of memorial book produced by exiled survivors of the pogroms in Eastern Europe and later of the *Shoah*. These books were intended to provide a memory of a destroyed culture and way of life for subsequent generations and are combinations of photographs and text evoking a life that no longer exists (Hirsch, 1997). The form of the *yizkher bikher* has been adapted by writers such as Henri Raczymow who, proceeding from the belief that the past resists being known or understood, have developed it so as to 'give narrative shape to the surviving fragments ... a particular mixture of mourning and recreation' (Hirsch, 1997: 248-251). Which is a good way of describing this thesis and the project it remembers and finds form for in the present.

³⁶ It is worth noting here Rebecca Schneider's recent warning that the association of photography with death is over-privileged. She comments that this 'over-privileging of death as the primary property of the photograph' may be 'a modernist habit of thought about photography, rather than a condition of photography itself' (2011: 222, note 8). For Schneider, the photographic still not only records the past but 'hails' us in the present – 'the inherent gestic hail of the photo itself: "Hey, you there!" it calls forward in time to an anticipated viewer, "Look at this here"' (140). In this regard she argues we need to move away from 'questions of lack and loss' and focus our attention on the idea of '*return*' (143, emphasis in original). She asks: 'Can we think of the still not as an artifact of non-returning time, but as situated in a live moment of its encounter that it, through its articulation as gesture or hail, predicts? This is to ask: is the stilled image a call toward a future live moment when the image will be re-encountered, perhaps as an invitation to response?' (141).

CHAPTER 3: LEAPING THE ABYSS (53 DEGREES, 2002-2003)

"He who seeks to approach his own buried past must act like a man digging. [...] [R]emembrance must not proceed in the manner of a narrative, ... but must, in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner, assay its spade in ever new places, and in the old ones delve to ever-deeper layers"
(Walter Benjamin in *The Berlin Chronicle (One-Way Street and Other Writings)*, 1970/1979: 314).

"If you place two or three or ten things next to each other that have never been next to each other before, this will produce a new question. And nothing proves the existence of the future like a question" (Ann Michaels in *The Winter Vault*, 2009: 122).

IN PERFORMANCE

An old style, wood-panelled library with high book stacks and ladders going off at impossible angles. A simple wooden table and chair with an old desk lamp. A woman doing research, looking for information on 'women doing extraordinary physical feats'.³⁷ A tall man in a long, encrusted coat tries desperately to jump across an invisible chasm but fails constantly. The woman feels his presence but cannot see him. There is a persistent knocking and the ringing of bells. Doors open and close mysteriously.

A librarian brings in boxes of archive material, projects images onto a screen, and pulls down hangings on which other images have been printed: women adventurers and mountain climbers from the late-Victorian era; a picture of women swimmers on the rocks at Robben Island. The woman in the library swims in a chair. The man in the long coat reads feverishly from books, shouting out fragments of text about the life of Makana, Links or Nxele, a Xhosa prophet and warrior imprisoned on Robben Island in the nineteenth-century, who drowned off the beach at Blouberg while attempting an escape.

The librarian tries in vain to keep the decorum of the library intact. The woman writes excited emails to her friends on her laptop claiming to be awake for the first time in seven years after the birth of two children. She is ready to work again, to make a new theatre piece. A baker appears at intervals to communicate the

³⁷ All quotations that appear here are from the unpublished play-text of *53 Degrees* (Magnet Theatre, 2002).

details of a bread recipe, flour rising in the air like mist with his every movement. The woman is in crisis, does she have anything to say? Is there anything inside or just a fog? She stumbles across material on the history of lepers on the island and then news of the first organized Robben Island swim. Suddenly a telephone rings. She follows the sound, climbs a ladder and finds an old-style telephone. She lifts the receiver: 'How did you find me here?' She rushes out of the library in a frantic chase to rescue her daughter who has been left at school by the *au pair* and then rushes back again to resume her work.

She comes across the story of Makana as the man tries once again, in vain, to leap across the invisible abyss. She wants the librarian to show images of the first Robben Island swim but the man in the coat, the would-be jumper, keeps inserting images of chiefs imprisoned on the island. He lists modes of escape: 'I tried to escape in a barrel; I tried to escape in a boat made of sheepskin'. She discovers the names of the swimmers: 'Miss Peggy Duncan; Miss Florrie Berndt who was stuck in a current for thirteen and a half hours.' The baker calls out: 'Gather your ingredients. 20 ounces of strong unbleached flour.' The librarian enters dressed in an apron covered in blood and text. The woman reads the apron: 'Franz Ludwig Berndt ... Florrie's father was the baker on Robben Island ... and the butcher ... and her grandfather'.

A black and white video image of kelp floating serenely in the ocean. A boatman rows slowly, silhouetted against the backdrop of the screen. The woman discovers a box of white bandages; endless white lengths off of which she reads the testimony of the Robben Island boatman to the Royal Commission. Joyful, light, playful music. She discovers an old fashioned swimming costume that she dons to go swimming but the librarian forces her into an old-style nurse's uniform. She resists; he insists; finally she succumbs. Video image of stone bollards in the crashing surf, hard, angular and immovable replaces the kelp on the screen as the woman enacts the regimented drudgery of Florrie's working life as nurse to the lepers on the Island. The leaping man begins to recite a litany of escape attempts as he floats in the cold ocean depths: 'I, Makana, tried to escape in a boat but drowned in the sea off Blouberg; We built a raft but it floated away; I kept building boats but they burned them; A man on the Island was kept in a cage, with his finger nails he

carved pictures of birds on the table top'. Florrie in her uniform seems to see him: 'He's drowning, that man, that man in the sea, he's drowning ... how far is it?' '10 miles ... very cold!'. The librarian brings in a note for the woman, a letter from Florrie Berndt: 'Dear Madam. I'd like to set you straight on a couple of matters. Life on the Island was not as you imagine. Robben Island was a paradise for us and most old Islanders would agree [...]'.

As she reads the letter the baker enters and lays down a blanket for a picnic. Then he steps forward and announces: 'The story of the race: as presented by Florrie, her father and her coach, Mr Ludin'. Shadow images float across the screen lit by flickering, golden light. Florrie enters the water before the other swimmers have even reached the island.³⁸ Peggy Duncan is so seasick on the crossing to the Island that when she realizes Florrie is already halfway across she asks to withdraw from the race. Most of the men pull out early on, unable to cope with the cold. Then, Florrie finds herself caught in the *Sepomopo*, an icy cold current, going nowhere. The harder she swims the further she is from her goal. Cold and exhausted she begins to hallucinate floating in the icy blue water. Disembodied limbs and surgical instruments float up and down the screen. The man in the coat reads extracts of Makana's story from a book. Arrested by the British and interned on the Island he was set to work in the slate quarry. After a year he tried to escape but the boat capsized off the beach at Blouberg and Makana drowned. There is a Xhosa belief that he will return from Robben Island but 'he is long in coming'. The man floats alongside Florrie, enveloped in blue light and a strange high-pitched sound. They become aware of each other's presence. Florrie panics as the man screams out Makana's warning about the arrival of the white man in the land of the amaXhosa. He introduces himself as Links or the left-handed. They embrace, floating. Sound of Ludin calling Florrie from the surface: 'You must give up now!' She refuses: 'No, no'. He calls again: 'You must give up. It's too cold!' Makana lifts Florrie to the surface while reassuring her that 'I will come again'.

She surfaces gasping for breath, sits in the boat wrapped in a blanket and watches Peggy Duncan finishing her swim in the dark. The pier is lit up by lights and a

³⁸ The race was conducted according to time. The swimmers did not therefore all begin together.

huge crowd has gathered to watch Peggy finish. As Florrie watches, she insists that she *will* try again. Then the librarian reads out a list of people who have swum from Robben Island from a history of long-distance swimming in South Africa. Florrie is listed as having successfully swum the course twice and having held the record for the longest period of any woman.

Makana sits on the chair reading a letter from Florrie while the woman swims high above him as if on the surface of the water. In the letter she reassures him that things have changed in the world. They took a long time but they have changed. When he reaches the end of the letter he is smiling. He gets up from the chair and sets himself to jump once more but as he makes to jump the lights go out to black.

ALONGSIDE PERFORMANCE

The production, *53 Degrees*, was the first and is therefore at the greatest distance, time-wise, from where I am now. It is hard to recall; it requires most remembering. To dwell in *53 Degrees* is both to dwell *among* and to dwell *on*. To dwell among the remains: the documents and documentation, intentionally and unintentionally produced by the process that manifested in the production. In other words, to dwell among what remains as a result of practices of *inscription* of one kind or another: scripts, video clips, still images, reviews. But it is also to dwell on my memories of that process, that which remains present through a practice of *incorporation*.³⁹

Dwelling *among* the remains of the processes of inscription produces a list of observations as follows:

- An episodic structure; each episode divided from the next by a kind of Brechtian titling in which one of the characters steps forward to announce the title of the following section to the audience.

³⁹ Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989) distinguishes between incorporating practices: 'messages that a sender or senders impart by means of their own current bodily activity, the transmission occurring only during the time that their bodies are present to sustain that particular activity' (72-73); and inscribing practices: intentional action that 'traps and holds information, long after the human organism has stopped informing' (73).

- The space of the library as storehouse of knowledge: that which remains from the past.
- The use on stage of the paraphernalia of the lecture hall: overhead projectors, data projectors, charts etc.
- A fractured, fragmented text made up almost entirely of quotations; a montage made up of bits of the archive of Robben Island as a place of banishment for lepers, lunatics, the chronic sick and those deemed politically deviant.
- A physical 'text'⁴⁰ of both 'real' and symbolic bodies; both connected to and indicative of the on-stage reality and engaged in the production or expression of images whose connection to the reality on stage is unclear, difficult and contradictory.

Dwelling *on* my memories of the process, produces another list:

- I remember a conversation with a friend, Jon Berndt, about his great-aunt Florrie Berndt, one of the first women to swim from Robben Island to the mainland.
- I remember Jennie's⁴¹ obsession with swimming as a way of coming back into her body after having had two children.
- I remember piles of paper gathered from the archives and placed on the floor of the rehearsal room and their constant transformation as papers shifted from one pile to another, classified according to ever-changing thematic groupings.
- I remember the extreme cold of the cavernous performance space where the production was first staged at the National Festival of the Arts in

⁴⁰ I use the word 'text' here with reluctance for as Dwight Conquergood puts it, 'scholarship is so skewed towards texts that even when researchers do attend to extralinguistic human action and embodied events they construe them as texts to be read'. For Conquergood, 'the root metaphor of the text underpins the supremacy of Western knowledge systems by erasing the vast realm of human knowledge and meaningful action that is unlettered' (2002: 147).

⁴¹ Jennie Reznick, principle performer in all of the productions in the current study and co-founder of Magnet Theatre.

Grahamstown,⁴² and the very small and stuffy, almost claustrophobic space in which it was staged for the first time back in Cape Town.

- I remember the beautiful sounds of John Field's piano nocturnes underscoring the swimming sequences.

In *Applications of Case Study Research* (2003), Robert K Yin identifies three types of case studies occurring in a multiple case study model/design. The first he terms the 'exploratory' case study, 'aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent ... study or at determining the feasibility of the desired research procedures'; the second he terms the 'descriptive' case study: the 'complete description of the phenomenon within its context'; and the third he terms the 'explanatory' case study 'explaining how events happened' - which causes produced what effects (5).

In my understanding, to explore suggests a state of not knowing and therefore a need to find the way as you go along; to describe suggests an observation in process – discovery by way of working through; to explain requires a state of knowing and therefore having the knowledge to share with others.

Methodologically speaking, this first production was like Yin's exploratory case study: it occurred early on and was about raising questions – to be dealt with in later projects - and finding a way of working both in terms of dramaturgical process and in terms of dramaturgical decision-making. The dramaturgical process was much less formed or conscious in this first production but it produced a multitude of questions and the first tentative answers that were to be worked through with greater clarity in the productions that followed.

Some might raise the objection that to begin without a question in mind and to rely on the first production to find one, reflects a rather sloppy, unsystematic,

⁴² An abandoned power station just outside of the town. In fact the performance was divided into three parts. It began with an installation, on the ground floor in a kind of ante-room, consisting of rows and rows of white flotation devices mounted on bricks, so that they seemed to float above the ground. The audience was then led up an old, iron staircase to the large turbine room above to view the performance itself. One wall of this space was made up entirely of windows and much of the glass was broken allowing the cold, winter wind to rush in. After the performance, the audience descended, via a second staircase, into another ground floor space in which a second installation had been installed consisting of large-scale, sepia images printed onto cloth of women adventurers and mountain climbers of the Victorian-era.

perhaps random approach to conducting research. But I would argue that far from being unsystematic or random it represents one of the actual strengths of performance as a mode of research, its particular emergent character. As Baz Kershaw puts it, 'even the most open and carefully expressed [questions] inevitably imply a more or less predictable range of responses, which flatly contradicts the qualities of radical openness and excess that the creativity of performance practice at its best can produce' (Kershaw, 2009: 112). Objections to this approach are based on a particularly orthodox sequentiality of knowledge production based on an idea that knowledge systems are vertically integrated. In other words they involve the application of a pre-existent schema or concept onto the experience of the world. According to this view, in order to know we refer our immediate and fragmentary experience or sense-data (lower level) to the pre-existent schema (higher level) in order to render it coherent and intelligible. In other words we produce a kind of cognitive map, defined according to a predetermined question or set of questions, *before* we use it to find our way. Then as we move in the real world we refer back to the map to check where we are and whether we are heading in the pre-determined direction towards the pre-determined destination which is the answer to the predetermined question/s. This results in a closing down of the possibilities of the future. It reduces the potential for getting lost and for chance encounters along the way and it restricts adventurousness and novelty and the unexpected discovery. But it also assumes that the world represented by the map is fixed rather than in a state of constant emergence, that the meaning that we seek is suspended awaiting our arrival, and that we are somehow detached from the world, self-contained, stable and fully formed rather than in a constant state of our own emergence in the course of our embodied, practical engagement and involvement with the world. As Ingold describes it:

[T]he world emerges with its properties alongside the emergence of the perceiver in person, against the background of involved activity. Since the person is a being-in-the-world, the coming-into-being of the person is part and parcel of the process of coming-into-being of the world (2000: 168).

Ingold argues, based on the work of David Turnbull (1989, 1991), that knowledge is not vertically but laterally integrated, formed or in a constant process of formation

as we move around in our environment. The knowledge that has brought us to one place is put to work in setting off towards another (Ingold, 2000: 229). So rather than applying a map that has been pre-made, the map is produced on the go. In other words, as Ingold puts it, 'we know as we go, not before we go' (230). This is not map-making or map-using but simply mapping, an ongoing process of attention and involvement and if this gives rise to artefactual representation these are merely 'stepping stones along the way, punctuating the process rather than initiating it or bringing it to a close' (231). It is interesting that while rejecting the idea that mapping is an outward manifestation of the map that pre-exists in the mind of the mapper, Ingold suggests that it is a 'genre of performance' (231). By this he means two things: one, that it is an interactive, embodied process of relating to the world by moving through it, and two, that it is a kind of 'retrospective storytelling ... the retelling of journeys made (or possibly the rehearsal of journeys to be made)' (232). Whether such a re-telling results in the generation of an inscription (as in the form of a retracing of a journey in the sand or on paper in the course of the performance) is for Ingold incidental, what is important is the performance itself, the process of *incorporation* to use Paul Connerton's term (cf. note 32 above). This is a process of remembering (putting the body back together or putting back together by means of the body) rather than of representation.

The experimental nature of performance as process, the trial and error method of feeling one's way towards a goal, open to the possibility of bumping into new discoveries along the way, the creation of imaginary or potential spaces within which to engage with specific questions, is what makes performance able to 'articulate complexes of thought-with-feeling that words cannot name, let alone set forth. It is a way of accessing the world, not just a means of achieving ends that cannot be named' (Radley, 1995: 13). The problem with this, as Nigel Thrift points out is that 'many academics do not see the world in this experimental way. For them it is already found before it is discovered. But in a world that has never been more mapped we surely still need to set out without maps every now and again' (Thrift, 2003: 2023).

So setting out 'without maps', at first with just the desire to create something new, we became concerned with finding images of women doing extraordinary feats

despite the difficulty of their circumstances. This was the starting point of the journey. This led us to the first Robben Island swim and that in turn led us to the site of Robben Island and its history, because to engage in the event of that first swim proved impossible without engaging in a heterogeneous history, filled with contesting narratives or at least fragments of narratives some more visible than others. Also because the swim suggested itself as another image of escape, another way to attempt to flee the bondages of the Island bringing the swimming narrative into relationship with the narrative(s) of escape attempts that are so much a part of the Island's various histories.

As we worked, the original impulse to find images of women transcending the limitations of female lives in a male-dominated world through physical activity (inspired/driven by a contemporary woman's struggle to reclaim a creative life interrupted by domesticity) continued to interface with the emergent discoveries of the varied and complex history of the Island. And the difficulties of the research endeavour (both because of the complexity of the history itself and because of personal life demands) became part of the research itself.

Questions emerged or perhaps puzzles that required solving. Central to these was one regarding the relationship between the past and the present. How do they exist alongside or perhaps entangled with each other? How do they speak to each other, if at all? 'Which is the true historical project, the pinpointing of an empirical cause or the trickier, less disciplined attempt to make links between the present and the past?' (Kaplan, 1989: 162). More specifically we were engaged by the challenge of making the piles of paper drawn from the archive – the traces of the past: 'remains, testimonies, documents, images, speeches, any visible sign of what has been' (Nora, 1989: 13) - live on stage in the present. In other words, how to embody or perform the archival fragments? What spatial image to create on stage to contain the fragments of the past? How to define the nature of relationship between the body of the actor present on stage and the bodies from the past, absent except for their disembodied and fragmentary inscription/description in documents from the archive? Dramaturgical questions of space, of structure, of character, all determined by the central question regarding the nature of the relationship between the past and the present.

As I engage in remembering the production, *53 Degrees*, it is obvious to me that these questions did not lead to easy answers. In fact in many senses the answers are as paradoxical as the questions were and continue to be and the production reflects this in its uneasy and disordered character. Interestingly, the experience of writing this chapter is like the experience of making the production – characterised by the difficulty of making disparate, perhaps impossible elements cohere satisfactorily; the struggle to find a single container for a multitude of emergent answers to first tentative questions. What follows then in the remainder of the chapter is a collection of explorations of procedures for grappling with or grasping for answers to difficult questions.

The Island

Robben Island, the low-lying, rocky outcrop situated some 10km off the coast of Cape Town, has been occupied in one form or another from before the first colonial arrival. It has primarily been used as a place of exile, banishment, isolation and imprisonment but it is most widely known as the prison in which Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for more than twenty years along with other leaders of the liberation movements resisting the apartheid regime.

Representations of Robben Island have shifted progressively since the early 1990s, in the first instance from a focus on oppression and suffering to a focus on a more positive narrative in which those who were imprisoned on the island are able to overcome their suffering and resist the apartheid state's attempts to marginalize them, and are able to achieve particular positive things while imprisoned; and in the second instance to a more departicularised narrative emphasizing universal values and behaviours, specifically the triumph of the human spirit over adversity or the forces of evil (Riouful, 2000). These shifts in representation to universal values and their particular future-orientation are part of a more pervasive disregard of mourning in the new South Africa.

In the process, however, certain versions or memories of the past have been silenced and/or 'tamed', to use Steven Robins's formulation borrowed from the Japanese anthropologist Yoneyama who describes 'the ways in which Hiroshima's

city leaders and the business community sought to “tame memories”, to wipe away the bloodstains and to smooth the jagged edges of the bombed city’ (Robins, 1997 cited in Riouful, 2000: 26). The silencing involves particular ways of remembering and the remembering of particular versions of the past that imply the ‘forgetting of certain voices and interpretations’ (Riouful, 2000: 25). In other words, the particular story of Robben Island which is now presented has become a metanarrative for the very foundation of the new South Africa, and the values espoused by the most famous of the prisoners, particularly Mandela, are held up as the exemplary qualities to be strived for by the new South African leadership.

However, ‘[h]olding up the island as a metanarrative and rhetorical space runs the risk of telescoping its history to coincide firmly with the period when it held apartheid’s famous political prisoners’ (Quayson, 2007: 175). Quayson argues the need for a more diverse and inclusive history of the island that might focus for example on the island as ‘an instrument of colonial public-health policy from 1846-1931’ (175). But it is not only the many pasts preceding the apartheid prison story of the island that are at risk of being silenced but also differing versions of that particular story itself. For example Motsoko Pheko, a past Pan African Congress (PAC) leader and post-apartheid Member of Parliament, in a publication entitled *The True History of Robben Island* (2002) states:

The history of Robben Island is running the risk of permanent mutilation and manipulation; and losing its revolutionary significance. [...] African children must know the truth about Robben Island. The history of Robben Island must not be a game. [...] The freedom fighters who bore the brunt of brutal savagery at Robben Island must be given their deserved place in the political history of our country; not sham ‘reconciliation’ which is without justice. (Back Cover)

Pheko argues that in contrast to PAC leaders like Robert Sobukwe, Mandela and other African National Congress (ANC) leaders were ‘treated leniently’ and that favours extended to them by the regime compromised them in negotiations which resulted in ‘the perpetual land dispossession of the African people’ and ‘the criminalisation of the armed struggle against apartheid through the establishment of the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”’ (11).

In his publication, Pheko lists a long line of ‘fighters against colonialism’ imprisoned on the island: Autshumato, ‘leader of the Khoi Africans’ in 1658; ‘Muslim

leaders from Malaysia' like Sheikh Madura in 1740, Tuan Said in 1761, and Tuan Guru in 1780; Makana, the Xhosa prophet and fighter against British colonialism, imprisoned in 1819; 'eight African leaders in today's Eastern Cape', Maqoma, Xhoxho, Fadana, Kenti, Dilima, Mathe and Mpafana in 1859; and Langalibalele 'of the Amahlubi Africans [who] led an uprising in Natal in 1873' (6). However, even while trying to paint a more inclusive picture of the Island's history as a prison and place of banishment for freedom fighters, something is left out because all these prisoners are male and this particularly gendered version has been criticised on at least two fronts. First, because one of the earliest prisoners happens to have been Krotoä, a woman (Deacon, H., 1996: 19; Coetzee, 1998: 113) and second, because women in the liberation struggle are resentful of the silencing of their role as a result of a focus on a prison that held black, male prisoners only.

So in one sense, my project to engage dramaturgically with the Island can be seen as an attempt to construct a more inclusive historical presentation. In this sense, *53 Degrees* proceeds as a kind of 'microhistory'. Microhistory has been defined as the reduction of the scale of observation for 'experimental purposes', motivated by 'the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved' (Levi, 2001: 101). Carlo Ginzburg, one of the foremost exponents of microhistory, in an article entitled *Microhistory: Two or three things that I know about it* (1993), identifies a number of key features including:

- 'the minute analysis of a circumscribed documentation, tied to a person who was otherwise unknown' (22)

[In our case, Florrie Berndt, the daughter of the Robben Island baker, and one of the first women to swim from the Island to the mainland];

- a focus on the narration of an individual event rather than being restricted to its 'reconstruction' (23)

[In our case, the story of the first organized Robben Island swim];

- ‘obstacles interfering with the research [are] constituent elements of the documentation and thus ... become part of the account’ (23)

[In our case, the staging of the contemporary woman’s struggle to reclaim a creative life interrupted by domesticity, and the difficulties, both personal and historiographical, that this presented].

The latter is a kind of Brechtian distancing device intended to overcome the possibility that the narration ‘*could* translate itself into an account that filled the gaps in the documentation to form a polished surface’ (23, emphasis in original). As Levi writes:

incorporating into the main body of the narrative the procedures of research itself ... clearly breaks with the traditional, assertive, authoritarian form of discourse adapted by historians who present reality as objective. [...] The research process is explicitly described and the limitations of documentary evidence, the formulation of hypotheses and the lines of thought followed are no longer hidden away from the eyes of the uninitiated. The reader is involved in a sort of dialogue and participates in the whole process of constructing the historical argument. (2001: 110)

Ginzburg, the historian, ‘who has only at his disposal fragments of things and documents’ (1993: 28), accepts their limitations while ‘transforming them into a narrative element’ on ‘a terrain of invention’ (28). He describes this work as a ‘leap’ over the ‘inevitable gap between the fragmentary and distorted traces of the event ... and the event itself’ (28); a leap betwixt the past and the present, across the inevitable abyss that lies between.⁴³

It seems to me that such a leap, with all its impossible dimensions, is central to the current project as a whole. In fact, it is one of the core images of *53 Degrees*, repeated over and over again in Makana’s attempt to jump across Cove Rock:

For Nxele,⁴⁴ the last act had come. He had fled with his followers eastwards along the coast. His final gesture of resistance created an extraordinary scene in an extraordinary setting. He chose a place known today as Cove Rock ... a huge cliff-like slab, 86 feet high ... at the extremity of a wide sandy beach.

⁴³ Perhaps this is one of the senses in which Rokem describes the actor as a ‘hyper-historian’, bridging the gap between past and present (2000: 13): the sense of hyperlink and hypertext – the capacity to jump from one part of a text to another or from one textuality to another.

⁴⁴ Makana was also known as Nxele or as Links (the left-handed).

Cove Rock ... is cleft by a deep, wide notch in the middle, through which the sea thunders, and is in fact two separate slabs. The one side adjoins the shore and the other the deep sea, and it was from atop the landward slab that Nxele declared that he would summon the Xhosa ancestors to rise from the sea and come ashore to help drive the white man from the land.

To summon them, he said, he was required to leap from the landward slab to the seaward one, across the gap above the dashing seas that burst into the notch.

[...] On the appointed day the sands surrounding Gompo [the Xhosa name for the sandy beach below Cove Rock] were packed by a multitude eagerly awaiting the miracle. Nxele ascended the rock from which he was to leap and sat atop it, contemplating the wide and dangerous gap. He sat thus through a long, weary day and made no attempt to jump. [...] From the crowds rose urgent cries, 'Nxele, the sun has set. We are tired and cold. Leap! Leap!' But he remained motionless. (Mostert, 1992: 483)

The introduction of Makana here is timely because it suggests the ways in which the production of *53 Degrees* is more than a microhistory of Robben Island; the ways in which my performance project extends beyond Ginzburg's narrative project. While Florrie Berndt is the 'person ... otherwise unknown' whose documentation is subjected to close analysis, and while the event of the first Robben Island swim reveals a history of the Island not usually brought to the fore, the production goes further. Florrie is not alone on the stage, not only because she is accompanied by the voice/body of the researcher but also because the stage is invaded by other characters, from other eras, without any attempt to explain this chronological inconsistency or the seeming lack of narrative coherence or logic that arises. This brings us back to Avery Gordon's 'ghosts' and Pierre Nora's 'sites of memory', to haunted spaces filled with light and shadow, the visible and the invisible, the present and the absent, both on stage and off.

Haunted Spaces

In an article entitled *Of Other Spaces* (1984/1986), Foucault suggests that '[t]he present epoch will be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed' (22). He traces a shift from 'medieval space: the space of emplacement' (22), to Galileo's 'constitution of an infinite, and infinitely open space' in which 'extension was substituted for localization' (23), to our present notion of 'site defined by relations of proximity between points or elements' (23). He

then poses the following question: What are the particular relations of propinquity in a given site? (23). He goes on to define two 'other' spaces that are of particular interest: 'utopias' and 'heterotopias'. Utopias are sites with no real place but that, nonetheless, have 'a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society'. Utopias are our present society in a perfected form but remain 'fundamentally unreal spaces' (24). Elsewhere, Foucault has described utopias as:

afford[ing] consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. (1966/1970: xviii)

Heterotopias, on the other hand, are 'counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites ... are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted'. According to Foucault, heterotopias, despite being 'outside of all places', might paradoxically be locatable in reality (1984/1986: 24). One of the defining principles of heterotopias is that they are 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (25).⁴⁵ But for Foucault:

Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy syntax in advance and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things to 'hold together'. (1966/1970: xviii, emphasis in original)

So heterotopias are defined in terms of an 'otherness' of place, the juxtaposition of the incompatible, a lack of syntax, the difficulty of holding things together, and by the disturbance or anxiety they induce.

⁴⁵ In terms of the current discussion, it must be noted here that Foucault goes on to use a theatrical metaphor to describe this aspect of heterotopias: 'Thus it is that the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another' (1984/1986: 25). In so doing, he reflects a limited and old-fashioned idea of theatre and the structure of theatrical time based on a classical model of linear narrative development in which things follow each other in a series. This is not my view, which is based on simultaneity and the spatial distribution of elements on the (not specifically rectangular) stage (cf Fuchs and Chaudhuri, 2002).

In *53 Degrees* we are engaged with three, inter-related sites, all of which I would argue are heterotopic. First is the site of Robben Island itself,⁴⁶ the original 'site of memory' in which 'memories converge, condense, conflict and define relationships between past, present and future' (Zemon Davis & Stam, 1989: 3). As the source or archival site, the Island itself is, in Doreen Massey's words, 'the realm of the potentially crucial configuration of dissonant (or concordant) narratives' (2005: 71). Second, the site of the library, the on-stage or theatrical space in which the production unfolds; the storehouse of the fragmented remains of the Island's narratives. Interestingly, Foucault singles out the library or museum as a specific form of heterotopia that he calls: 'heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time'.

[T]he idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place. (1984/1986: 26)⁴⁷

Third, the site of theatre itself, which I would suggest is a machine for creating heterotopias – imaginary-real spaces for the 'meeting and the non-meeting of the previously unrelated ... integral to the generation of novelty' (Massey, 2005: 71).

The relationship between these three sites is complex, even paradoxical. They are like intersecting circles, parts overlap and other don't; or nested Russian dolls, but here each, to some extent, both contains and is contained by the other(s). Between these sites there are relationships of representation, of contestation and of inversion all occurring simultaneously. Each site, while locatable in physical reality,

⁴⁶ It is apposite that in the first project we are dealing with an island isolated from the mainland by the sea that surrounds it because Foucault's fifth principle of heterotopias suggests 'a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. [...] To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures' (1984/1986: 26). The Island, is both physically and discursively, 'a site of excess closed upon itself ... but also forever open to the full range of its possible significations' (Nora, 1989: 24).

⁴⁷ The art historian, Aby Warburg, set up a library that was both his private collection and a site of public education – based in his home but open to the public. The library was also a stage for the exhibition of the panels of his lifelong project *Mnemosyne* that has been described by Annalisa Sachi as 'a gigantic condenser for gathering energy currents that continue to animate Europe's memory in the form of its "ghosts". [...] According to Warburg, images possess tremendous energy, with the potential to make man regress or guide him on his path to knowledge. Mnemosyne, as the History of Art more generally, has been enigmatically described by Warburg as "a ghost story for truly adult people." Thus, according to Warburg's idea, the Library was the public space in which a particular community could share this "ghost story"' (Sachi, 2010: np).

exists 'outside of all places'; assemblages or constellations of 'elements ... grouped, made relevant, placed in relation to one another to form totalities' (Foucault, 1969/1972: 7). And the juxtaposition of these elements gives rise to what Massey calls 'the constant emergence of uniqueness out of (and within) the specific constellations of inter-relations' (2005: 68). But what exactly are these elements that make up the sites? And what are their particular relations of propinquity?

In his discussion of Foucault, Deleuze suggests that from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/1972), the source of the above quote, onward, Foucault views all historical formations or archaeological strata as variable combinations of the discursive and non-discursive, the articulable and the visible.

A way of saying and seeing, discursive practices and forms of self-evidence: each stratum is a combination of the two, and in the move from one stratum to the next they vary in terms of composition and combination. [...] What Foucault takes from History is that determination of visible and articulable features unique to each age which goes beyond any behavior, mentality or set of ideas, since it makes these things possible. (Deleuze, 1986/1988: 48-9).

According to Deleuze, Foucault insists that articulable statements have primacy over what he call 'visibilities' but 'this primacy will never impede the historical irreducibility of the visible – quite the contrary, in fact' (49). It is exactly because the visible has its own laws that it remains autonomous from the articulable statements and that the statements in turn retain their primacy. '[B]ecause the articulable has primacy ... the visible contests it with its own form, which allows itself to be determined without being reduced' (50). And so while 'there is no link that could move from the visible to the statement, or from the statement to the visible ... there is a continual relinking which takes place over the irrational break or the crack' (65). We have arrived once more at the leap across the abyss.

The theatre too is made up of the discursive and the non-discursive, what is said and what is seen, and while these may sometimes overlap, they remain essentially heterogeneous; what is seen continually resists the primacy of what is said. Foucault describes this as a battle:

[B]etween the one and the other attacks are launched and arrows fly against the enemy target, campaigns designed to undermine and destroy, wounds and blows from the lance, a battle ... images falling into the midst of words ... discourse cutting into the form of things [...]. (Foucault 1973/1983: 26, cited in Deleuze, 1986/1988: 66)

And it is, to a great extent, this battle in the theatre between what is seen and what is said that affects us, the audience (and the performers), that makes us feel and know particular things in particularly charged ways. The visibilities and the statements and their charged inter-relationship incite, provoke and produce constitutive, active affects.

Now, paradoxically, according to Deleuze, although 'visibilities are never hidden, they are none the less not immediately seen or visible'. When 'we consider only objects, things and perceptible qualities, and not the conditions which open them up ... visibilities become hazy or blurred to the point where "self-evident" phenomena cannot be grasped by another age' (57). This is reminiscent of Nora's comment that we have gone 'from the idea of a visible past to an invisible one' (1989: 17). In Deleuze's words, '[v]isibilities are not forms or objects, nor even forms that would show up under light, but rather forms of luminosity which are created by the light itself and allow a thing or object to exist only as a flash, sparkle or shimmer' (52). In this sense they are like ghosts.

I have already noted that one of the aims of the production was to construct a more inclusive presentation of the Island's multiple histories, one that brought excluded and invisible characters and events to the fore. Avery Gordon suggests that:

To write stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities is to write ghost stories. To write ghost stories, implies that ghosts are real, that is to say, that they produce material effects. To impute a kind of objectivity to ghosts implies that, from certain standpoints, the dialectics of visibility and invisibility involve a constant negotiation between what can be seen and what is in the shadows (1997: 17).

53 Degrees is a ghost story. The people on whom the characters that appear are based, are long dead - some were dead during the lifetimes of others - yet they continue to occupy the same spaces and to find ways of communicating: the woman's email to her mother who is dead; Florrie's note to the woman; the woman's letter to Makana under the sea. The ghosts come into play not because they have been called but because a door has been inadvertently opened while searching in the past for something else/other. The introduction of ghosts into the

library upsets or unsettles the propriety of the place, introducing a 'charged strangeness' (Gordon, 1997: 64). The space of the library is meant to be an ordered and quiet space, of contemplation and of cerebral study, and the librarian does his best to retain a sense of decorum and order, but the ghosts and their strange charge infuse the space with volatility. They upset all pretensions to order and coherence; they bring things to light that were hidden in the shadows; they set bodies in motion to produce material effects and palpable affects; they demand a relationship with those of us of the present, they demand a reckoning. In the space of the library the characters haunt each other; the past haunts the present; the visible haunts the articulable. In the space of the theatre we are all haunted. Gordon suggests that:

haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening. Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as transformative recognition (1997: 8).

The ghost is the figure that transforms those from the past who cannot speak or could not speak into the unspeakable, that which we do not or cannot speak about in the present. The body in the context of academia is also unspeakable, domesticated, tamed, but in the charged presence of ghosts it is freed to practice its own and particular forms of sensuous knowledge.

In chapter one I suggested that history in this study is not the history of the past as much as it is the history of the present. In this respect, Avery Gordon comments that:

Perceiving the lost subjects of history – the missing and lost ones and the blind fields they inhabit – makes all the difference to any project trying to find the address of the present. [...] To write the history of the present requires stretching towards the horizon of what cannot be seen with ordinary clarity yet. And to stretch toward or beyond a horizon requires a particular kind of perception where the transparent and the shadowy confront each other. As an ethnographic project, to write the history of the present requires grappling with the form ideological interpellation takes – 'we have *already* understood' – and with the difficulty of imagining beyond the limits of what is already *understandable* (1997: 195, emphasis in original).

For Foucault, writing the history of the present is associated with experience:

I aim at having an experience myself – by passing through a determinate historical content – an experience of what we are today of what is not only our past but also our present (1991: 33, cited in Liggett, 2003: 39).

But as Helen Liggett suggests, Foucault's work is located in a theoretical tradition that is suspicious of '[w]hat the intellect can call up on its own', that believes 'cognitive forms limit imaginative productivity', that is intent on 'searching for alternative modes of presentation', and along with Benjamin, insists that 'abstract thought can be a barrier to experience in modernity' (40). In other words experience for Foucault lies outside of or beyond the immediately available, totally articulable and coherently organised worlds; beyond the 'horizon of what cannot be seen with ordinary clarity yet'.

So the challenge is, how to access this particular kind of experience? How to pass through [the] historical content? How to achieve that 'particular kind of perception where the transparent and the shadowy confront each other'? I would argue that this first production proposes two tentative answers.

First, by engaging in a process of digging. As Benjamin suggests in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, 'in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner', we must 'assay [the] spade in ever new places, and in the old ones delve to ever-deeper layers' (1970/1979: 314). The choice of 'digging' is important. We do not read the landscape in the manner of a text, we engage with it through a physical embodied process and its other, more sensuous, forms of knowledge. Paradoxically, it is through embodiment that the theatre makes space for the disembodied – the ghostly. And the actual process of digging is as important as the resulting finds, for as Benjamin reminds us, 'it is to cheat oneself of the richest prize to preserve as a record merely the inventory of one's discoveries, and not this dark joy ... of the finding itself' (314). But the landscape of the sites in which we dig is not already formed, fixed for all time, waiting for us to begin the digging. It must be constructed. Digging offers us an opportunity to resituate and recombine fragments to create new meanings and new opportunities for the future. As Karen E. Till (2005) comments, 'spaces, locations and material objects are materially, discursively, and symbolically unearthed, redefined, and newly mapped, only to be interpreted and critically analyzed again. This is an ongoing process of landscape production, one

that, Walter Benjamin reminds us, keeps open the process of interpretation' (95-6).⁴⁸

Second, by having the courage to dwell in the spaces in-between; the spaces of juxtaposition; the haunted spaces where language breaks down and syntax cannot hold things together. Being willing to leap *into* the abyss rather than across it, for there is nothing that links the past and the present except the act of re-linking, the leap itself. It is a leap that must be made by all of us, performers and spectators alike.

⁴⁸ Reference is to *A Berlin Chronicle*. See Benjamin, 1970/1979, 293-346.

CHAPTER 4: THE POST-MUSEUM⁴⁹: PERFORMING BEYOND THE BOX (*ONNEST'BO*, 2002-2006)

The area which is now referred to as District Six 'was, until about 1840, a largely uninhabited open expanse of land' (Soudien, 2001: 99) on the east side of the emerging city, close to the port. It became part of the municipal area of Cape Town, as the sixth district, in 1867. It seemed to have functioned primarily as a point of arrival for new immigrants to the city whether from other parts of the country or from far flung parts of the world who lived alongside freed slaves, the city's labourers and its more destitute population. As Soudien describes it:

To it came rural migrants from every part of South Africa, speaking a multiplicity of languages. It was home to the Mfengu, the Gcaleka and the Gaika. It was there that wandering African continentals such as Clements Kadalie, from then Nyasaland, came to set down their roots. British workers seeking to find their fortunes in the colonies set up their households there and left behind traces reminiscent of Victorian Britain. It also provided the first South African homes for Jews fleeing from Tsarist Russia. To it also came hundreds from the west coast of India with names such as Gangat, Desai and so on. Added to this were countless numbers of St Helenans, Australians, black Americans, people from the Carribean and almost from wherever one cares to mention. (2001: 99-100)

The removals from District Six and its ongoing marginalization within the city began as early as 1901 when African people were moved out to Uitvlugt, later to be renamed Ndabeni. More prosperous inhabitants began to move to the suburbs and District Six became increasingly neglected. In 1966, District Six was declared a white area under the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950)⁵⁰ and the remainder of the community was earmarked for removal to what became known as the Cape Flats. The removals lasted from 1966 through to 1982 by which time most buildings in the area had been bulldozed, churches and mosques being the stark exceptions, rising up from the now barren landscape as lonely but defiant reminders of the once thriving community. All in all, around 60,000 people were displaced from their homes in District Six.

⁴⁹ See Hooper-Greenhill (2000): 'As societies change, the idea of the museum must be reborn. What would the post-museum look like?' (22).

⁵⁰ The apartheid law that enforced physical separation by creating different residential areas for different races and resulted in the forced removal of large numbers of people across the country and the destruction of their communities.

The District Six Museum was opened in December 1994. According to Ciraj Rassool the District Six Museum Foundation ‘certainly wanted a project through which it would be able to contest the past’ keeping the memories of the place and its inhabitants alive in the present, but it also wanted to ‘mobilise the masses of ex-residents and their descendants into a movement of land restitution, community development and political consciousness’. He also makes the point that when the Museum was created, ‘the choice of the category of “museum” did not necessarily express a specific commitment to the institution of the museum’ (2001: viii). He points out that Peggy Delport, a trustee and ‘central curator of the Museum’s key exhibitions ... regularly refers to the process of inscription, performance, annunciation and theatre that are the life’s blood of the Museum’s work’, highlighting in his words the ‘ephemeral processes’ central to this work (ix). Delport herself has written:

I often wonder in what spirit and with what intention the term ‘museum’ was first used in the context of District Six. Thinking back on this problematical notion of the ‘museum’, with all the connotations of collections and displays, the term seems at odds with the ... life of the museum project as a living space and a place for working with memory. Recalling that time, I believe that the term ‘museum’ may have been evoked as something that suggested a solidity, a continuity and permanence that could withstand even the force of the bulldozer and the power of a regime committed to the erasure of place and community. (Delport, 2001: 11).

In an article entitled *Beyond the Box*, the performance scholar, Rustom Bharucha (2000), questions the idea of the museum in the specific context of the postcolony. His article is in part, at least, a response to what he defines as ‘misleading’ attempts by ‘diasporic global intellectuals like [Arjun] Appadurai and [Carol] Breckenridge to subsume the Indian museum within the larger dynamics of public culture’ specifically in their article: *Museums Are Good to Think: Heritage on View in India* (1992). He poses a number of important questions: ‘... are museums good to *think*? What needs to be *done* about them? How can they be dismantled – and re-invented - to contribute more substantially to the public culture in India itself?’ (2000: 15, emphasis in original).

I refer to Bharucha here not just because his comments from the Indian context resonate with the situation in South Africa but also because he has a recent connection to the District Six Museum having participated as a keynote speaker at

the *Hands On District Six* conference (2005). Bharucha's contribution to the conference is summarized in another of his articles, *The Limits of the Beyond: Contemporary Art Practice, Intervention and Collaboration in Public Spaces* (2007). He begins by acknowledging what he refers to as the Museum's 'curatorial coup ... not to display the actual violence inflicted on District Six through the usual didactic activist strategies, exemplified in blow-ups of black-and-white photographs representing the demolition of the neighbourhood' in favour of exhibiting 'the tender immediacies of home – a home away from home, everyone's home' (402, emphasis in original). He goes on to suggest that 'at the risk of reopening wounds, it [has] become necessary to "destroy" the symbolic reconstruction of a home-away-from-home in order to remember the demolition of "real" homes in a more compelling and complex way' (404). He argues that:

a new curatorial imaginary for the District Six Museum is badly needed to counter the selective amnesia of cultural tourism that the New South African state and its corporate ancillaries are keen on promoting. Instead of continuing to 'warm the cockles of our hearts', as Bertolt Brecht would put it, the museum needs to open itself up to the chill of history by looking outwards beyond the framework of the museum and its inventory of precious collected memories. [...] [T]he existing curators of the District Six Museum need to explore new political strategies, practices and interactions with the public whereby the history and social memory of District Six can be reinscribed in its terrain. Instead of depoliticizing its practice through the mainstreaming of its distinguished museological record, it needs to re-politicise its *raison d'être* through new engagements with public space. (404-405)

In this chapter I will focus on the production *Onnest'bo*, created in collaboration with the District Six Museum. My argument is (1) that *Onnest'bo* performs the Museum's curatorial strategies particularly in its focus on ordinary objects; (2) that it does so beyond the 'box' of the museum itself, engaging with and re-animating public space and reinscribing history and social memory into the terrain of the city itself; and (3) that by its very nature as performance it enacts erasure (mentioned by Delport above and argued for by Bharucha as we shall see below), both as the central element of the narrative of District Six and forced removals generally, and as a proposal for ongoing, inhabited and embodied acts of remembering - the need to do it over and over, again and again.

IN PERFORMANCE

Onnest'bo is made up of a series of scenes that enact a schematic narrative of forced removals loosely based on the story of District Six but with no direct reference to it. The scenes are performed against a background of music created for the performance from the sound archives at the District Six Museum and consisting of a collage of musical styles prevalent in District Six prior to removals from the area. The spoken text plays a secondary role to the physical text in the storytelling. In fact what spoken text there is was originally entirely improvised in English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and isiZulu slowly becoming set as the production continued to be performed over time.

The production was designed to be portable and to be performed in any open space, preferably outdoors. However, over the period of five years during which the production was performed it slowly moved indoors and was performed in a room at the District Six Museum in what was historically District Six, converted into a makeshift theatre space,⁵¹ and finally at the Little Theatre at the University of Cape Town. This, coupled with the slowly solidifying text mentioned above, meant that the production became more and more the conventional theatre event over time and arguably lost something of its 'moving' nature as its performance space changed.

When it is performed outdoors, *Onnest'bo* opens with a truck hurtling into an open space in which five large wooden boxes⁵² stand in a semi-circle. When the vehicle comes to a stop, two men in brown dustcoats emerge to deposit a final sixth box into its designated place. Slowly the remaining characters and their belongings emerge from the boxes, dusty and old, peering out through a somnambulist haze in which they don't recognise each other. Each character clutches an artefact from his/her past, an object that enables remembering, so that the process of re-membering or re-populating the space can begin. The objects themselves (a clock for Willie, a purse for Lily, an empty picture frame for Rosie) are steeped in the private

⁵¹ This room now forms part of the new Fugard Theatre.

⁵² These boxes are more like large wooden packing crates but I use the word 'box' here to resonate with the title of this chapter and its reference to Bharucha.

histories of their owners. As the characters begin to move in space, their bodies mapping out a performance of each object, their agonised, struggling gestures articulate a knowledge of an embodied loss.

When the character Willie locates an alarm clock all the characters gather around it. The sound of the clock triggers something in their collective memory and it sends them spinning back forty years into a time before their removal. From this point the action moves forward in time establishing a community, uprooting and dispersing that community, and then charting their slow and protracted attempts to return home. By the end of the play we have returned to the time we were in at the beginning and the characters, aged again but now able to recognize each other, are allowed to rebuild their homes from the few belongings they have carried with them in their boxes, boxes that are now refashioned as new homes.

Perhaps the most salient and moving moments in the play are when bodies move to transmit story, and the absence of voice is complete. The destruction of the homes and the rendering of an empty landscape are relayed through the wordless, larger-than-life metaphor of the blue-pants on stilts squashing the miniature paper houses. The mourning of the removal is signified by the activist clenching a fist as the black and white photographs of families and festivals burn. The fact of dispersal and the sense of desolation it gives rise to are shown through the silent animation of plastic packets and old newspapers, blowing across the emptied landscape. The defiance against the state is encapsulated by the activist toyi-toyiing on a box, and the rest of the cast grasping a long stretch of red material denoting both the vast national death under the apartheid years and the united protest against it. When the cast pile into a box, moving in jolts and standing in cramped discomfort, we understand that they are on a train, as they travel from the Cape Flats into the city centre. Their state of exile, their loss of place and rooted situation forces them towards un-recognition, as they reference the strangeness of each other that they expressed in the opening sequence. The once united members of the community are enduring an uncomfortable physical proximity in the moving vehicle, their body movements at odds with their absorption in a private agony, pain and desperation. The train is also about the disorientation of the exile onto the Cape Flats. The image evokes the reality of the transport life, the over-crowdedness, the crime, the

distance, the journey, the dispersal that makes them disconnected from their sense of community. The entire scene evokes a sense of lack of recognition on all levels; it's about squashed-ness and atomisation, about the physical distance from the heart of the city, being at once on the periphery and relegated to a political margin. The theft of a purse by one becomes a metaphorical enactment of the community transforming and turning in on itself.

ALONGSIDE PERFORMANCE

Performing the Museum: The Intimate Life of Things

"... hardly a form of matter without a living quality; no silent thing without its voice." (Hippolyte Taine (1856) cited in Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, 1872-4: 551).

It seems commonplace to assert that a museum is an institution that displays objects from the past to be viewed by visitors or 'viewers' in the present. For example, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, in *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (2000), focuses on 'the museum as a scopic site' (108), in which: 'objects and artefacts are put on display. They are there to be looked at. Museums are sites of spectacle, expository spaces, where exhibitionary complexes are sited' (14).

She is concerned with, 'the social frameworks for looking and seeing, the locations where looking and seeing take place, and the relationship between the viewer and the object viewed' (107).⁵³

Susan M. Pearce suggests that 'museums exist to hold particular objects and specimens which have come to us from the past (i.e. the period up to midnight yesterday)' (1994: 1); 'selected lumps of the physical world to which cultural value has been ascribed' (9).

⁵³ Although she is aware of the 'power' of sight within Western culture and its tendency to marginalise other sensory modalities, and does attempt to ameliorate this by highlighting the need to recognise that 'objects are interpreted through a "reading" using the gaze which is combined with a broader sensory experience involving tacit knowledge and embodied responses' (119) and that 'with some artefacts, sensory and embodied reactions are of enormous significance' (115), the gaze remains primary even when/if it is combined with other sensory experience.

In her study, *History after Apartheid*, Annie Coombes notes that:

The District Six Museum has no permanent 'collection' as such but rather relies on the testimony of ex-residents and the fragmentary remains of their possessions, often literally unearthed from the debris of demolition. These are the intimate histories of (extra)ordinary lives lived in an apartheid city, and not only are they the strength of the museum, but they also helped to bring it into existence. (2003: 123)

Nadia Davids describes how when the Museum first opened former residents responded with an almost spontaneous assemblage of their private histories: dresses, birth certificates, pots, gramophones, etc., which they brought to the Museum along with their stories and personal narratives (Fleishman & Davids, 2007: 156).

My intention in this section, as indicated above, is to suggest that *Onnest'bo* performs the Museum's curatorial strategies particularly in its focus on the everyday objects 'unearthed from the debris of demolition'. My interest here is not in the encounter between individual visitors to the museum and the objects in the museum but that between performer and object, as part of the process of dramaturgy, the making of a performance work, and in the performance itself. Such an encounter, characterised as it is by embodiment and improvisation and drawing on a diverse range of sensory modalities, is certainly not a simple 'reading' of the object as text even if the reading is in quotes. I will argue that it is a much more complex process that attempts to engage not with 'dead' objects but with the intimate life of things left over from the community that was District Six and their silent voices.

The dramaturgical process for *Onnest'bo* began with an exercise that was to prove seminal for a variety of different reasons. The cast members were asked to spend the first week of rehearsals dwelling in the Museum with the specific task of identifying objects that spoke to them in particularly charged ways. They were asked to select up to five such objects to create a personal object collection, then to find a container for the collection, anything that could hold the objects together, whether that be a box of some kind or the various pockets of an old coat or a pair of boots and to bring their collection, in their container, to the rehearsal space at the end of the week. Instead of presenting their collection through some form of exhibition or

show-and-tell they were asked to perform the collection for the rest of the cast and production team. The exercise was an adapted version of one introduced to us by the Canadian dramaturge, Judith Rudakoff, in a project she had done with us just before the rehearsals began called *Common Plants*.⁵⁴

The result of the exercise was extraordinarily powerful. Suddenly in the space of the rehearsal room a community of characters began to emerge, at first like strange and unformed ghosts made up from fragments of lives that seemed to emerge from out of the objects, either on their own or in relationship to each other (other objects and the bodies of the performers). Around these characters the dense and richly felt world of the performance and the narrative would coalesce but more importantly the exercise itself shaped the use of boxes, containers and objects of all shapes and sizes in the production itself.

In this section I would like to spend some time focusing on the relationship between the body of the performer and the object, between what Simon Shepherd, in another context, calls 'body and non-body' (2006: 138).

Shepherd argues that performance has a long history of engagements between body and non-body that continue into the present. First he points to training regimes that attempt to push the body beyond its usual limits as in the case of yoga for example and/or that bring the body into a consciousness of its place within an ecological system in which it is only one part, as in the case of Suzuki's stamping exercises that attempt to heighten the body's relationship with the earth.⁵⁵ Second, he suggests that performers have always utilized non-body elements to expand the body's capacities, from the masks and stilts of the Chakaba dancers of West Africa or the buskins of the Greek tragedians for example, to the corsets and ruffs of the Elizabethans, and even the point shoes of the ballerina. He sees these as precursors to the use of silicon to enlarge the breasts of Italian TV 'star' Lolo Ferrari, or the plastic surgery-as-performance of Orlan. To expand Shepherd's history one might point to the ways in which the mechanical and/or the digital has made the

⁵⁴ See <http://www.yorku.ca/gardens/> for more information on this project.

⁵⁵ According to Tadashi Suzuki, rather than the performer taking the relationship between the feet and the ground for granted, 'in stamping, we come to understand that the body established its relation to the ground through the feet, that the ground and the body are not separate entities' (Suzuki, 1986: 9).

theatrical stage into a performance of its own in, for example, Robert Lepage's work,⁵⁶ or the ways in which industrial machinery, such as concrete mixers or cranes and anthropomorphized robotic machines become performers in their own right alongside the bodies of the human actors in, for example, Dogtroep's site-specific works.⁵⁷

Shepherd uses three words, rather loosely, to describe the relation between body and non-body: negotiation, assimilation and mingling. Negotiation suggests a conferring between two separate and distinct entities in an attempt to reach a compromise or agreement. It might also suggest a getting-over or through a particular obstacle or difficulty. In this sense body and non-body remain distinct but engage in finding ways of bridging the gap between them. Assimilation suggests the absorption of one element into the other so that at the end of the process it seems as if we are left with only one of them. Here the body either becomes 'as if' non-body or the object as non-body becomes 'as if' part of the body so that the two seem indistinguishable. Mingling, on the other hand, suggests the action of circulating through a crowd or blending in. This suggests a moving, shifting and ongoing process in which, at times we experience ourselves as separate from the crowd, while at other times individuality or distinctiveness gives way to sameness – 'as if' we become part of the crowd.

What I am arguing for here adds a fourth element to the body/non-body relationship, a process in which the body of the performer engages with the non-body of the museum object as a historiographical operation. This is not a straightforward argument to make. Particularly when there is already much critique about the status of object-based collections and their capacity to evoke or access the past.

Writing with reference to Auschwitz, James E. Young (1993) questions the display of objects that remain from the past, as a means of accessing that past. He is concerned that remnants of the past begin to stand in for 'the whole of events' that they become 'mistaken for the events from which they have been torn'. In other

⁵⁶ In this regard, see Innes (2005).

⁵⁷ See <http://www.dogtroep.nl/> for examples.

words: 'coming to stand for the whole, a fragment is confused for it' (127). As he describes it:

what most visitors remember from trips to the Auschwitz museum are their few moments before the huge glass-encased bins of artifacts: floor to ceiling piles of prosthetic limbs, eyeglasses, toothbrushes, suitcases and the shorn hair of women. [...] What precisely does the sight of concentration-camp artifacts awaken in viewers? Historical knowledge? A sense of evidence? Revulsion, grief, pity, fear? That visitors respond more directly to objects than to verbalized concepts is clear. But beyond affect, what does our knowledge of these objects – a bent spoon, children's shoes, crusty old striped uniforms – have to do with our knowledge of historical events? (132)

Here Young raises important questions regarding the relation between affect and historical knowledge, questions that challenge any attempt to argue a role for performance in remembering the past. Most intriguing is the idea of somehow getting somewhere 'beyond affect', a space/place in which the 'knowledge of historical events' apparently resides. I will return to this later in the chapter with reference to Bharucha's discussion of the concept of 'beyond' in the articles referred to above.

Young's concerns regarding object collections might be summarized as follows:

- The collecting of objects implies the possibility that what was destroyed can be made whole again. 'The sum of these dismembered fragments can never approach the whole of what was lost' (132/33).
- The artefacts on display at Auschwitz were assembled by the Germans. They constitute an act of German remembering. As such, they are intended as 'images of ... death' (133), 'the leftovers of a process of annihilation ... the collected debris of a destroyed civilization' (132). There is no attempt to remind us of the life these objects once incorporated: 'the memory of a people and its past are reduced to the bits and rags of their belongings, memory of life itself is lost' (132).
- '[M]useums, archives, and ruins may not house our memory-work so much as displace it with claims of material evidence and proof. Memory-work becomes unnecessary as long as the material fragment of events continues to function as witness-memorial' (127).

As we have already noted however, the object collections at the District Six Museum were assembled not by those who destroyed District Six, but by those who were the victims of the destruction and displacement that followed or their families. This process of assemblage resonates with Nadia Seremetakis's description of a project in the Greek city of Kalamata, where, in the aftermath of a major earthquake that destroyed the city in 1986, she engaged the community in putting the remains of their lives back together. Ten years after the disaster, in 1996, as part of the commemoration ceremonies, she was asked by the city authorities 'to propose and create an historical-cultural event for the occasion' (2000: 310). The event she proposed was in her words, 'less a commemoration of the disaster than it was a commemoration of the popular memory of that event and more particularly of the struggle for memory in the wake of the defacement of the earthquake' (322). She set out to explore how the people of Kalamata themselves had chosen to preserve and recover the destroyed city in their own personal and private ways and then through a collective process of participatory action to 'remember' what had been destroyed.

Her description of the process is reminiscent of the origins of the District Six Museum described above:

citizens brought me objects full of memory, fragments from domestic interiors such as ancestral photographs, curios and bric-a-brac from shelves and cabinets such as an antique phonograph or an old photo of the city square, objects that they had saved all these years, objects of the heart that in themselves represented small triumphs over the attack on memory and identity afflicted by the disaster. (312)

For Seremetakis the process was twofold: an assemblage of fragments and an excavation of memory from the fragments. The former proposes that the display of such memory objects, their assemblage, reflects people's attempts to reassemble their 'lives and their city from the fragments made by the earthquake- a process we could term the "poetics of fragments" because it focused on how the people restored meaning, order, pattern, and aesthetics to their lives in the aftermath of disaster' (322). The latter relies on a belief that objects hold within them particular historical sedimentations, 'stratigraphies of personal and social experience'; that 'memory can be found embedded and miniaturised in objects that trigger deep emotions and narratives' (310). It requires an archaeological process that attempts

to penetrate the surface of the object, stripping away layers to gain access to the multiple stratigraphies that lie beneath.

Such an archaeological process happens through the body, through the provoking of gestures and acts of perception and sensory experience. This is best articulated in *The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory* in which Seremetakis argues that the object is not passive/mute/dead, it 'demand[s] connection and completion by the perceiver' (1994: 7). For Seremetakis:

Performance can be such an act of perceptual completion as opposed to being a manipulative theatrical display. [...] However, the mode and content of completion/connection with the sensory artifact is not determined in advance, it is not a communication with a Platonic essence, but rather it is a mutation of meaning and memory that refracts the mutual insertion of the perceiver and perceived in historical experience and possibly their mutual alienation from public culture, official memory and formal economies. *This performance is not "performative"* – the instantiation of a pre-existing code. It is a poesis, the making of something out of that which was previously experientially and culturally unmarked or even null and void. Here sensory memory, as the meditation on the historical substance of experience is not mere repetition but transformation which brings the past into the present as a natal event. (1994: 7, emphasis in original)

Like the people of Kalamata, and the people of District Six, the performers in the dramaturgical process constructed an assemblage of objects from what they discovered in the museum and then worked with the objects through performance to bring them to life, to make them speak, to extract the memories embedded within them. It is important here to emphasise that it is a working *with* and not a working *on*. Working *on* suggests a particular hierarchy of relations between the human subject and the material object in which the subject attempts to gain mastery over the object. It also implies an understanding of objects as 'dead' and subjects as alive, and a sense of boundedness in which discrete elements are set off against each other.

Authors, like Bruno Latour, loosen up the subject-object relation suggesting that sometimes the object speaks or at least 'acts back' and the relation is inverted so that the object acts like a subject and the subject is acted upon like an object (cited in Ingold, 2011: 213). Latour describes these as 'quasi-objects' and 'quasi-subjects' and suggests that they are connected in relational networks (1991/1993: 51 and 89). To say that objects speak or act back implies a degree of agency, a sense of being alive not usually associated with things. I will now go on to explore this idea

of the apparently mute object speaking back to the human subject and disrupting the 'normal' subject-object relationship with recourse to the idea of the fetish.

In the introduction to *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986), Arjun Appadurai suggests that: 'No social analysis of things ... can avoid a minimum level of what might be called methodological fetishism' (5). According to Peter Pels (1998), Appadurai's notion of "methodological fetishism" is a reversal of the commonly accepted hierarchy of facts and values in social and cultural theory, which says that things don't talk back. Or, better, that says that those people who say that things talk back may be dangerously out of touch with reality'. For Pels, things 'talk back' in two possible ways: 'Things can talk back because they are animated by something else, or they do so because of their own "voice"', in other words, 'things act, emit messages and meanings on their own' (94).

The first possibility he refers to as 'animism' – things are alive because they are animated by something foreign to them. The performer animates the object by endowing it with a life from the outside - 'a spirit made to reside *in* matter'. The second possibility he refers to as fetishism – 'To the fetishist, the thing's materiality itself is supposed to speak and act; its spirit is *of* matter'. The performer is affected by the sheer material presence of the object; its 'materiality is not transcended by any voice foreign to it' (94, emphases in original).

But, argues Pels, because Appadurai also states that 'things have no meanings apart from those that human transactions, attributions and motivations endow them with' (1986: 5), what he is referring to is best described as 'methodological animism' not 'methodological fetishism'. Methodological fetishism is something altogether more radical and could be used to good effect to describe what actually goes on in the current study when the body of the performer and museum object encounter and engage each other.

To understand this relationship of body and object as fetishistic forces the attention onto materiality itself. Materiality here is not to be understood as that which distinguishes things from living beings, objects from subjects. As Pels makes clear, 'Not only are humans as material as the material they mold, but humans themselves are molded, through their sensuousness, by the "dead" matter with

which they are surrounded' (1998: 100-101). This means that materiality is 'a quality of relationship rather than of things' (100). For Pels, what is required is:

an aesthetic sensibility in which the direction of mutual influence of human subject and thinglike object can be reversed; in which we cannot only think animistically, of anthropomorphized objects, of a spirit *in* matter, but also fetishistically, of human beings objectified by the spirit *of* the matters they encounter. (101, emphasis in original)

Furthermore, the acceptance of fetishism directs us 'to move in, rather than escape, the sensuous border zone between our selves and the things around us, between mind and matter' (102).

While I am sympathetic to thinking of the museum object left over from the past as a kind of fetish, my argument here attempts to go even further than this simple inversion to suggest a breakdown of the basic duality of subject and object, the mental and the material, and proposes a much more fluid relationship in the encounter between the objects in the museum and the body of the performer.⁵⁸

According to Patricia Spyer, the fetish, in the varied ways in which contemporary theorists understand the term, operates within particular interstitial sites or what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) calls 'contact zones' which the fetish 'variously territorializes, unsettles, displaces and reaffirms' (Spyer, 1998: 2). In this contact zone the fetish object:

Gesturing as it does toward a beyond that guarantees its own futurity as well as towards a posited past moment of origin ... is never positioned in a stable here-and-now and thereby confounds essentializing strategies that aim for neat resolutions and clear-cut boundaries among things and between persons and objects. (Spyer, 1998: 3)

As Annemarie Mol and John Law (1994) suggest:

Sometimes, ... neither boundaries nor relations mark the difference between one place and another. Instead, sometimes boundaries come and go, allow leakage or disappear altogether, while relations transform themselves without fracture. Sometimes, then, ... space behaves like a *fluid*. (643, emphasis in original)

As such, the body of the performer and the objects from the museum need to be understood not as externally bounded and complete (things in the Kantian sense),

⁵⁸ In this I am prompted by Ingold's latest work. See Ingold (2011).

set off against other things in what Heidegger calls their 'over-againstness' (1946/1971: 167); but rather, following and extending Gregory Bateson (1987), as things 'not limited by the skin' (322). In other words, both bodies and objects 'leak' into a 'fluid space' in which there are no clear boundaries, in which things overflow in unpredictable ways (Mol & Law, 1994: 659). It is a space of 'mixtures that can sometimes be separated. But not always, not necessarily' (660). Yet, despite not being solid or stable, it also displays a 'robustness' in which things don't easily collapse (662). So as Mol and Law put it: 'the study of fluids ... will be a study of the relations, repulsions and attractions which form a flow' (664). This fluid space of encounter, to return to Shepherd, is much more of a 'mingling' of materials than a 'negotiation' of body and object.

So as Ingold (2011) puts it, to bring something to life 'is not a matter of adding to them a sprinkling of agency but of restoring them to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist' (28). And likewise, 'human beings do not exist on the "other side" of materiality, but swim in an ocean of materials [...] a flux in which materials of the most diverse kinds, through processes of admixture and distillation, of coagulation and dispersal, and of evaporation and precipitation, undergo continual generation and transformation' (24). Ongoing 'generation and transformation' is what dramaturgy is all about; the processes of bringing forth form into the world out of the fluid spaces of encounter. This is what Seremetakis means by 'poesis'. When we speak of the relation of body and non-body as a historiographical operation we are not talking about revealing a 'Platonic essence', the essential meaning of the thing left over from the past. Rather, we are making something in the present; we are engaged in the history of the present.

Now, I have argued that my dramaturgical process is a process of dwelling, and for Ingold, 'the dwelling perspective situates the weaver in amongst the world of materials ... the material flows and currents of sensory awareness within which both ideas and things reciprocally take shape' (2011: 10). Susan M. Pearce (1994) comments that 'material objects are as much a part of the weave of our lives as our bodies are; indeed these two aspects of our lives have the fundamental characteristic of physicality not possessed by most other facets of our existence' (1).

What I find interesting about these two ideas is first that they both use weaving as a way of explaining the generative process, which is also the way Eugenio Barba (1985: 75) describes dramaturgy; and second, is the link between material flows and physicality - between bodies and the movement of materials.

Movement is so much a part of the dramaturgical process in general and (as will be discussed in greater detail in the next section) of *Onnest'bo* in particular, both in the making of and in the production itself. In developing his dwelling perspective, Ingold draws on James Gibson's idea that 'perception is fundamentally about movement' (2011: 11) but is critical of Gibson's definition of movement as being 'locomotion with reference to the rigid environment' (1979: 72). Ingold argues that:

The *rigid* environment cluttered with objects of all sorts, can be occupied, but it surely cannot afford dwelling. We need a different understanding of movement: not a casting about the hard surfaces of a world in which everything is already laid out, but an issuing along with things in the very process of their generation; not the *trans-port* (carrying across) of completed being, but the *pro-duction* (bringing forth) of perpetual becoming (2011: 12, emphasis in original).

So the life of things is about becoming rather than being, and the body of the performer and the objects in the museum need to be understood as 'gathering[s] of the threads of life' (things in the Heideggarian sense) (Ingold, 2011: 246, note 1), engaged in a particular practice that 'bring[s] together the resistance of materials, bodily gestures and the flows of sensory experience ... rhythmically coupl[ing] action and perception along paths of movement' (16).

The second reason why I think the fetish is a productive insertion into this discussion is the fact that fetishes engage in 'abnormal traffic' (Pels, 1998: 94); they disrupt normal processes. As Freud noted, 'when the fetish comes to life, ... some process has been suddenly interrupted' (Freud, 1927/1950: 201). The fetish arose in West Africa as an other to the capitalist commodity; 'an irrational (that is non-capitalist) attribution of value' (Pels, 1998: 97). As such the fetish is an 'other thing'; "'other" in relation to accepted processes of defining the thing by its use and exchange' (98).

The objects in the District Six Museum are hard to engage with because they are as Young reminds us merely fragments, only parts of the whole that has been destroyed, but also because they are *ordinary*. Unlike the enormity of the artefacts

at Auschwitz, the piling up of human prostheses, of hair and teeth that point to untold and inexplicable suffering and loss of human life, the ordinary objects in the District Six Museum seem slight, lonely, mundane, almost banal, particularly when they are disconnected from the testimony of their owners who might speak on their behalf, lending them the weight of lived experience.

But the museum object on display, despite its apparent ordinariness, becomes an 'other thing' precisely because it is not defined by its use or exchange value. It is removed from circulation, from its usual traffic in human, everyday matters. As such, it assumes a kind of aesthetic value as it is encountered by human subjects: museum visitors and performers, in the 'contact zones' of the museum or the dramaturgical process in the rehearsal space. But, as Pels comments, inverting the usual subject-object trajectory, this 'aesthetic value ... radically distinguishes it as a material object from the subject it confronts' and as a result:

In this confrontation, the fetish always threatens to overpower its subject, because ... its lack of everyday use and exchange values makes its materiality stand out, without much clue as to whether and how it can be controlled. (1998: 99)

This articulation of the inability of human beings to control the meanings of fetish objects – 'other things' – recalls De Certeau on 'voice'. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980/1984), De Certeau recalls a moment in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in which Crusoe discovers a footprint in the sand that does not belong to him; it is not his footprint, but the source/the origin/ the maker of the footprint is absent. The footprint is the presence of an absence, a remainder, something left behind when its body was removed – 'it is the mark of something past and passing, to the "practically nothing" of a passing-by' (De Certeau 1980/1984: 154).

Crusoe describes this mark of what has passed, made by the absent body, as 'something wild' and De Certeau suggests that '[t]he wild is transitory; it marks itself ... but it does not write itself. It alters a place (it disturbs), but it does not establish a place'. In this sense, for De Certeau, that which is 'wild' constitutes 'an alterity in relation to writing', an alterity that he calls 'voice' (155).

The arrival of the voice on/into what had seemed to Crusoe the 'blank' (silent) page of the island, the order and ownership of which he is creating through

the act of writing his journal or record-book, is an 'alien enunciation' that 'arises *alongside*, coming from beyond the frontiers reached by the expansion of the scriptural enterprise. "Something" *different* speaks again and presents itself ... in the form of a voice or the cries of the people excluded from the written' (158, emphasis in original). Such "'returns or turns of voices'" (156) are both 'illegible' and cut across the authority and order of statements, 'moving like strangers through the house of language' (159).

The problem posed by the footprint in the sand (what Crusoe fears most) is not that it does not speak, it is that when its voice is finally heard (when Friday eventually shows himself), it manifests through one of two modalities: as a 'cry' – unintelligible, beyond recognised language and in need of treatment – or through the body as vehicle of language – either docile 'acting out ... the other's saying' (155) or wild, disordered, undisciplined, disruptive, violent. In other words, when allowed to speak it threatens the capacity of translation, of 'scholarly exegesis' (163), the 'mechanism, perfected over generations, that makes it possible to ... transform the unpredictable or non-sensical "noises" uttered by voices into (scriptural, produced, and "comprehended") "messages"' (160).

The same it seems to me is true of the objects in the Museum, the displaced left-behinds of the removals from District Six. The problem of the objects is not so much that they are mute but that when they are made to speak they do so beyond language; through the body in 'wild, disordered, undisciplined' ways. As such they seem to resist attempts to access the past, to 'know' it at all – except perhaps through practices like performance.

It needs to be noted however, that the objects we are talking about here, the objects in the personal collections made by the performers as part of the dramaturgical process and then used in the performance itself, are not 'real' objects, in the sense that when the performers moved from the Museum to the rehearsal space they did not take actual artefacts out of the Museum but found or fabricated substitutes.

Does this not seem to disqualify everything I have been saying so far? Is not one of the defining, powerful and enduring features of any museum that it is a place 'where "real objects" can be seen' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000: 14); objects that

validate the past because they really come from the past? Are visitors to the museum not moved and excited precisely because the objects they encounter are 'real' and as such seem to offer unmediated contact with another time and perhaps another place? As Pearce notes: 'In museums we are accustomed to call this the "power of the real thing" and to regard it as the greatest strength which a collection-holding institution commands' (1994: 20).

I would suggest not, and that recourse to the idea of the fetish helps us here once again. As Pels, with reference to the work of William Pietz (1985; 1987; 1988) makes clear, the idea of the fetish was generated by Dutch merchants of the seventeenth century as a derisory alternative not only to capitalist commodities but also to their protestant Christianity. As such they were differentiating their beliefs from African beliefs on the one hand and Catholic practices on the other. In the same way that 'any "trifle" that "took" an African's "fancy" could become a fetish or object of worship' (Pels, 1998: 98), a simple wafer and a vessel of wine could become the body and blood of Christ. These are not symbols representing something that is absent; they are for the believer actually what they say they are with the power to have real effect. They are in Catholic terms, a 'real presence'.

As such, in Pels's analysis:

the fetish shows the limits of representation by disrupting the continuity of reference and replacing it by a substitution (not a re-presentation but a presentation of something else). Yet at the same time it asks how we can know the substituted by the signals emitted from what substitutes for it; or how we can know the virtual if that can only be conveyed through the material itself. (114)

This I would suggest is exactly what my particular project is all about, the ways in which performance makes form in the present for something that has passed (not as a 're-presentation but as a presentation of something else'; not as a re-enactment but as a refiguration), and the questions and complexities this generates.

Finally, Nadia Seremetakis describing her process in Kalamata, notes that:

In my attempt to assemble a public exhibit, I discovered that some citizens had assembled their own secret museums. A middle-aged man contributed a broken, wooden tobacco pipe, a shard of a ceramic vase, a china coffee cup minus its saucer, a glass bottle stopper minus its bottle:

"These objects tell their own story. I have them on display in a cupboard at home; I call it 'the earthquake display'. What can we say today? The earthquake was a shattering event. Do you know what it means to be looking for your own wife in the dark when she has lost her voice?" (2000: 326)

I believe this resonates with *Onnest'bo* because each individual collection created by the performers in the process and then expanded on in the performance literally in the boxes that populate the space, is just such a 'secret museum', a miniature form of the District Six Museum itself transplanted beyond its walls and into the terrain of the city. But also because looking for something in the dark that has lost its voice seems an apt description for the process of engaging with what has been lost or destroyed, through the apparently mute solidity of material artefacts, objects that seemed to have lost their voices.

Performing 'Beyond the Box'/The Performance of Beyond

"... an amateur of Time, an epicure of duration."
(*Van Veen in, Ada, or Ardor: a family chronicle - Part Four*, Nabokov, 1969)

"The present is only the top of the past, and the future does not exist."
(Vladimir Nabokov, *Strong Opinions*, 1974: 184)

Bharucha's argument that begins with *Beyond the Box* (2000) and moves on to *The Limits of the Beyond* (2007) shifts from 'a broader polemic against museumisation' to 'the more illusive task of substantiating the word "beyond", either as a preposition (connoting a processual state of being) or as a noun ("the beyond")' (2007: 397); from a simple, perhaps even 'utopian' call to move out of the box – 'whether it is the "black box" of the theatre or the ultra-white, air-conditioned, dust-free box of the museum' – and to engage with the 'disruptive energies beyond' (2000: 19), to the more complex questioning of what one discovers when one has moved out. 'What does one actually enter beyond the box?' (2007: 397).

Bharucha proposes 'three metaphoric possibilities of the beyond as a leap into the unknown, a flight into an open sky and a jump into the abyss' (2007: 399). He goes on to suggest that:

All of them – the leap, the flight, and the jump – involve movement, illuminating the crucial fact that the beyond is not static. It moves and is always moving, even though it gives the illusion of standing still. (399)

On the face of it, *Onnest'bo*, satisfies the call to move out of the box. Its first proposal is to take the work of the Museum out from the museum building itself and to insert it into the terrain of the city beyond, potentially reaching a much more diverse audience. It is also very much about movement. Indeed, the central proposition of my earlier article with Nadia Davids was precisely that *Onnest'bo* constituted 'moving theatre' (Fleishman & Davids, 2007). By this we meant a number of things simultaneously:

- First, the interface between its form and its content: between its narrative of enforced movement - removal and dislocation - and the fact that it was designed to be performed on the move, in any available public space, the entire production packed into large packing crates, loaded onto the back of a truck and then unloaded again in another space.
- Second, the fact that its performance modality was almost entirely physical movement rather than relying on a spoken text. The spoken text is not absent but it is also not the central or authorising element. When the spoken text is present it is as a fragment of the overall soundscape, alienated, distorted almost hidden under the predominance of the musical score, or it operates as a kind of Brechtian interruption to the predominant movement and music score, stopping the flow of the movement and the ubiquity of the music and demanding that the audience take stock of what is happening in front of them.
- Third, the way in which it moves people, in the sense in which it makes them feel things on an (e)motion(al) level.

It is this third sense that poses questions for James E. Young.

[B]eyond affect, what does our knowledge of ... objects ... have to do with our knowledge of historical events? (1993: 132)

Is it possible/desirable to get 'beyond affect'? Is there a beyond to get to? Is it valid to see affect and historical knowledge as a binary?

Feelings shift our relationship to things; they are pathways to change and recovery. Not allowing ourselves to have feelings in the face of difficult events/occurrences leads, in psychoanalytical terms, to repression and pathology. In the theatre we feel collectively. The body of the audience is greater than the sum of its individual parts. As a part of the audience we each feel something individually but we also have sympathetic responses to the feelings generated by others – we are moved by what we see and by others together with whom we see. In the theatre we also feel publicly, allowing our secret and intimate emotional lives to surface in a public space amongst strangers.

This might be so, but what has it got to do with knowing anything about past events, with historical knowledge? When the bodies of the performers and the non-bodies of the objects encounter each other and the bodies of the audience in performance, something happens - 'Something throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation: a something both animated and inhabitable' (Stewart, 2007: 4). This is what Kathleen Stewart refers to as an 'affect' and in her terms affects:

work not through 'meanings' per se but rather in the ways that they pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dreams, dramas, and social worldings of all kinds. Their significance lies in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible. (6)

In contrast to Young's attempts to get 'beyond affect' to something called 'historical knowledge', I would argue along with Stewart, that what performance offers is precisely a way of engaging affectively, a willingness to be moved, to stay in and with affect in an attempt to respond to the voices from the past. It is an attempt to:

slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us. [...] Not to finally 'know' them – to collect them into a good enough story of what's going on – but to fashion some form of address that is adequate to their form; ... by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate. (Stewart, 2007: 6)

A different kind of knowing; a different order of knowledge? Affect and knowledge are not opposites. They are part of a fluid and sensuous complex of responses to the past.⁵⁹

But *Onnest'bo* engages with 'the beyond' in a much more complex way too. When the production leaves the box, what it discovers beyond is what Bharucha refers to as the 'tumultuous present' (2007: 399) that the museum and the theatre are to a large extent insulated against. To describe this 'tumultuous present' Bharucha recalls Homi Bhabha:

Homi Bhabha urges us to move beyond the platitudinous readings of the beyond as a 'new horizon' or a 'leaving behind of the past' towards a more disorientating process of destabilising fixed categories, identifications, temporalities and directions. Neither here nor there, but somewhere in between, the state of being 'in the beyond' is not so much a jettisoning of the present, but 'a return to the present' which Bhabha in his enigmatic way, relates to '*touch[ing] the future on its hither side*'. This 'intervening space' – and here there is a jump between the metaphoric thrust of Bhabha's language and his political imaginary – becomes a *space of intervention* in the here and now. (Bharucha, 2007: 399, emphasis in original)⁶⁰

This interstitial space of the present, existing in the gap between the past and the future, 'between the terror of the known and the indeterminacies and risks of what lies ahead' (Bharucha, 2007: 399), a space that is full of movement but seems to be standing still, recalls the discussion on objects and what performance does when it engages with the artefacts from the Museum as part of the process of making and in the production itself beyond the box.

The objects from the past now displayed in the present seem still but are in fact full of movement. The engagement with them suggests a commitment to unlock this movement but also a commitment to being in the present as an in-between space rather than moving back to the past or jumping to the future. It means engaging sensuously in what Nabokov (1974) refers to as the 'texture of time':

Time as the dim hollow between two rhythmic beats, the narrow and bottomless silence between the beats, not the beats themselves, which only embarr Time. (184-5)

⁵⁹ Cf Avery Gordon(2007) on 'sensuous knowledge' in the introduction to the present study.

⁶⁰ Here Bharucha is referring to Bhabha, 1994: 1-7.

It is the willingness to engage with duration rather than to be determined by calendars and clocks (185).

Or as Seremetakis puts it with a slightly different take on the relationship of movement and stillness to the present:

Against the flow of the present, there is a stillness in the material culture of historicity; those things, spaces, gestures, and tales that signify the perceptual capacity for elemental historical creation. *Stillness* is the moment when the buried, the discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from the historical dust. (Seremetakis, 1994: 12, emphasis in original).

In the performance of *Onnest'bo*, when the final box has been inserted into the empty space, the characters literally emerge from within the boxes into a new world 'beyond', as if out 'from the historical dust'; in Bhaba's terms 'return[ing] to the present'. They find themselves in a deserted space that must be animated by remembering. The space they enter, the space of the 'tumultuous present', is, I would argue, an uncanny space. The 'uncanny', as Freud (1919/2003) utilizes it, is the English translation of the German word *unheimlich*, usually translated as 'uncanny' or 'eerie' but which literally means 'unhomely'. This is pertinent because the characters in *Onnest'bo* have literally lost their homes and the space they find themselves in is eerily strange. But it is a particular kind of strangeness, 'that which was once well known and had long been familiar' is now felt as strange (Freud, 1919/2003: 124). The strangeness of the space into which the characters emerge is compounded by the fact that on some level it feels familiar and yet it is not immediately recognizable. On the other hand, for Freud, 'the term "uncanny" (*unheimlich*) applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open' (132). So in this sense, the characters themselves are uncanny, emerging with their objects from out of the boxes where they have been secreted away for so long. But Freud, also refers to Jentsch's⁶¹ notion that the uncanny indicates 'doubt as to whether an apparently animate object really is alive and, conversely, whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate' (135). Both of these senses apply here too: with reference to the life of the apparently

⁶¹ See Jentsch, 1906/1995.

inanimate objects in the museum discussed in the previous section, now emerging alongside the characters from the boxes to play their part in the performance; and the apparently animate characters, who in the initial stages of the performance at least, seem to be beyond life or needing to discover life again after having been encased inside the boxes for so long.⁶² As Helene Cixous describes it:

Human beings are equipped for daily life, with its rites, with its closure, its commodities, its furniture. When an event arrives which evicts us from ourselves, we do not know how to 'live'. But we must. Thus we are launched into a space-time whose co-ordinates are all different from those we have always been accustomed to. (1994/1997: 9)

But, as I indicated in the introduction to this study, there is another beyond at play here that in its own ways displays a sense of the uncanny. The work under discussion, not least *Onnest'bo* itself, exists within the particular context of Mbembe's 'postcolony'; in one sense at least implying, however imperfectly, being beyond the colony. This is the familiar-strange space into which the characters emerge, inserting themselves into the present as uncanny arrivals. As I noted earlier the characteristics of the postcolony include volatility, excess, hysteria, racial delirium, superfluity, nervous discomfort.⁶³ It is a fractured space in need of remembering – of being put back together – but it not easily remembered. And yet, as Mbembe reminds us, it is also, strangely, characterised by improvisation, flexibility and resilience. So the characters that emerge from the boxes turn to what they have to hand, and by working with the objects that they have at their disposal, they enter time, a procedure that allows them to explore its textures affectively as they enact the cycle of community destruction and re-building again and again.⁶⁴

Performance and Erasure

In her proposal for the 'post-museum' that began this chapter, Hooper-Greenfield argues that: 'As societies change, the idea of the museum must be reborn' (2000:

⁶² Boxes that do resemble coffins to some extent.

⁶³ See Mbembe, 2004.

⁶⁴ In this regard it is worth noting, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) does, 'that a particular intimacy seems to subsist between textures and emotions' and that 'the same double meaning, tactile plus emotional, is already there in the single word "touching"; equally it's internal to the word "feeling"' (17).

22). Faced with the particularities of the postcolony, Bharucha suggests a need to perhaps dismantle and re-invent museums in order that they may 'contribute more substantially to public culture' (2000: 15). He proposes:

drawing on the ecological principles that are embedded in traditional forms – principles relating to erasure, renewal and impermanence, as can be discerned in the rich gamut of ritual and cultural practices like *kolams* (traditional floor drawings). Here the entire point of the artwork lies in the erasure of the floor-drawing after it has been completed, following hours of meticulous work. In such practices, which have continuing significance in the cultures of everyday life, the resistance to conservation and commodification provides a useful provocation in structuring new ways of 'visualising' Asian pasts. (16, emphasis in original).

The same it could be argued is true in the African context. Bharucha goes on to 'deepen the provocation further':

How does one translate the principle of erasure embedded in pre-modern practices by intersecting it with, say, postmodern Derridean readings of erasure? [...] To what extent can the principle of erasure challenge the very ethos and structure of the museum itself? Can a museum erase itself? (2000: 16).

Bharucha does point out that this should not be understood literally. He is speaking metaphorically and '[m]etaphors are not meant to be taken literally; they are valuable not so much in indicating *what* to think, but *how* to think' (17, emphasis in original). His challenge seems to be to engage with erasure as an ongoing provocation; as a means of achieving something not as an end.

In the light of this provocation, it is my contention that a performance like *Onnest'bo*, by its very nature as performance, enacts erasure, both as the central element of the narrative of District Six and forced removals generally, and as a proposal for ongoing, inhabited and embodied acts of remembering; the need to do it over and over, again and again. As such it suggests a way in which the museum might operate beyond the institutional and structural context as a post-museum.

Onnest'bo enacts erasure because like all performance it only exists when it is being performed and when the performance ends nothing material remains. It begins with a space into which the boxes are deposited and out of the boxes the performance emerges into the space. By the end the space has been transformed into a space of inhabitation, an image of the reconstructed community. But then the music stops, the audience drifts away, the objects are returned to their boxes, the

characters transform back into actors, and the boxes are removed from the space. Nothing is left behind, no physical trace of its being/having been in a particular site. It is like a dream that feels so real when you are experiencing it, when you are dreaming, but when you awake you are not certain whether it actually was like that at all. In this way the performance mirrors the actual experience of 'the erasure of place and community' (Delport, 2001: 11) that occurred in District Six.

But what one is left with when *Onnest'bo* is over and the erasure has occurred, are affective traces - feelings about the event we have just experienced - and memories - images of what was heard and seen. Our bodies are different. We have been touched and perhaps we have been moved.

And *Onnest'bo* moves too, moves on, as all performances do, insatiably, searching for another space, another site, to re-emerge. Tomorrow it will appear somewhere else and it will have to be made again, brought forth again, performed again every time as if for the first time. In this way *Onnest'bo* answers Young's concern that '[m]emory-work becomes unnecessary as long as the material fragment of events continues to function as witness-memorial' (127). The performance is memory-work; it requires the involvement of the people of today - performers and audience alike - to remember the events of yesterday. But it needs to be done over and over and it needs to be actively engaged with.

CHAPTER 5: 'STORIES LIKE THE WIND' - (*RAIN IN A DEAD MAN'S FOOTPRINTS*, 2004-2005)

For the San,⁶⁵ stories inhabited the landscape. They floated on the wind, coming from a distance, behind the backs of mountains and along well-travelled tracks. They drifted towards those who were alert to them, those who sat waiting for them to float into their ears. We know these things because they were told by //Kabbo, a /Xam elder, to the German-born linguist Wilhelm Bleek in the 1870s. //Kabbo's words were written down in a phonetic script devised by Bleek⁶⁶ and translated into English as follows:

I do merely () listen watching for a story, which I want to hear; while I sit waiting for it; that it might float into my ear.† These are those to which I am listening with all my ears; while I feel that () I sit silent. I must wait (listening) behind me, + while I listen along the road ... while I feel that the story is the wind.

† The people's stories.

+ //Kabbo explains that, when one has traveled along a road, and goes and sits down, one waits for a story to travel to one along the same road. (Bleek & Lloyd, 1911: 303)

⁶⁵ The term San is primarily a linguistic label used to describe those hunter-gatherers speaking a particular group of related languages that are similar but vary quite considerably from place to place. The San were the first peoples of Southern Africa and those few who remain are distributed across a geographical area that today includes parts of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Angola. The San are often referred to as Bushmen or Basarwa (in Botswana). The word 'Bushman' comes from the Dutch 'bossiesman' meaning 'bandit' or 'outlaw', a term given to the San in their battle against colonial domination and extermination and apparently interpreted by them as a sign of respect for their valiant resistance against the colonial onslaught. The /Xam represent one particular San language group occurring in the southern-most parts of the area of distribution.

⁶⁶ I include here some of the relevant elements of Bleek's phonetic system. For a more detailed description see the preface to Bleek & Lloyd (1911) and Bleek, W.H.I. (1862: 12-13) from which the former quotes extensively:

/ indicates the dental click. Sounded by pressing the 'tip of the tongue against the front teeth of the upper jaw, and then suddenly and forcibly withdrawing it' (Tindall). It resembles our interjection of annoyance.

! indicates the cerebral click. 'Sounded by curling the tip of the tongue against the roof of the palate, and withdrawing it suddenly and forcibly' (Tindall).

// indicates the lateral click. Sounded by placing the tongue against the side teeth and then withdrawing it. 'A similar sound is often made use of in urging forward a horse'.

indicates the palatal click. 'Sounded by pressing the tip of the tongue with as flat a surface as possible against the termination of the palate at the gums, and removing it in the same manner as during the articulation of the other clicks'.

X an aspirated guttural, like German ch.

` indicates an arrest of breath (as in *tt'uara*).

This record is one of more than 13,000 pages of similar records transcribed by Bleek and his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, from the words narrated to them by //Kabbo and a small number of other /Xam narrators who lived with them in their house in Mowbray between 1870 and 1884.⁶⁷ Most of these narrators had been brought to Cape Town as convicts to serve prison terms at the Breakwater Convict Station. Their crimes were various, ranging from stock-theft to murder. Bleek recognised that the /Xam were destined to extinction. By 1840 the trekboers had occupied territory all the way up to the Orange River, stealing /Xam land and waterholes, murdering families and wiping out the game on which the /Xam depended for their survival. He wrote in 1875, just before his death: ‘with energetic measures ... [we could] preserve, not merely a few “stick and stones, skulls and bone” as relics of the aboriginal races of this country, but also something of that which is most characteristic of their humanity, and therefore most valuable – their mind, their thoughts and their ideas’ (cited in Skotnes, 1999: 29). The result of this attempt at preservation is known as the Bleek and Lloyd Collection and is housed in the library of the University of Cape Town (UCT). It is without a doubt the most extensive, remarkable and important archive of San culture and history available anywhere. As Pippa Skotnes notes:

It speaks with melancholy eloquence of the culture and life-style that was feverishly being annihilated, and of the intellectual traditions the /Xam held dear. Poignantly, it locates these traditions within the landscape, and shows how the taking away of the land and its resources meant the destruction of the people themselves. (1999: 31)

What I am proposing here is that the third site of memory focused on in the current study is not a place, as in the preceding cases of Robben Island and of District Six, but a collection of stories: different kinds of stories, some historical, some mythological and some simply descriptive of aspects of everyday life. But the collection of stories is itself embedded in a broader story of collecting: the story of Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and the /Xam men and women who shared their house over a number of years

⁶⁷ The remarkable story of the origins of the Bleek and Lloyd Collection can be found in Bank (2006) and Skotnes (1996 and 2007).

and their joint project of narrating, recording, 'collecting ... and publishing the records of this dying out race' (Bleek, 1871: n.p.).

For almost a hundred years after the death of Wilhelm Bleek, the stories told by //Kabbo and his co-narrators received little attention from anyone outside the circle of the Bleek family. The entire archive was donated to the University of Cape Town library after Lucy Lloyd's death in 1914. From then, until the 1970s, it seems to disappear from view receiving little, if any, serious attention from scholars. The archive resurfaces in the 1970s in the work of the linguist Roger Hewitt (Hewitt, 1976) and later in the same decade in David Lewis-Williams's groundbreaking work on the interpretation of San rock art (Lewis-Williams, 1981). According to Lucy Lloyd, //Kabbo had been interested in the idea that his words and stories would live on in books; that future generations would have access to them. He seemed acutely aware of the fact that his culture, language and way of life were dying out and that little would soon remain. This seemed to motivate his stay in Mowbray (even after his prison term had ended), his passing on of his knowledge, and his enduring of the separation from his family and home.

For the stories told by these /Xam narrators at Mowbray to be written down in books and never performed again, however, is surely another kind of death. They are after all parts of an oral tradition that ontologically is only really alive when it is changing. As Megan Biesele comments:

Because the storytelling way of making social sense is by its nature continually creative and re-creative; it actually has its being only in its new performances. That is why variants in oral life are as uncountable as grains of sand. People who only encounter folktales in print should realise that any collection of living folktales is an accident ... they fail to represent the single most important truth about a folktale tradition, which is its ongoing, creative life in the minds of its narrators and listeners. (1993: 65-66)

At intervals over the past ten years I have been engaged in interpretative work with these /Xam narratives through the medium of performance. I have not engaged in this work alone but in collaboration with others too numerous to mention but most located within the ambit of the Magnet Theatre and Jazzart Dance Theatre companies. In this work we have attempted to initiate a dialogue with the material in order to access and re-animate the creative and intellectual resonance of the stories, while at the same time making them available to a contemporary audience

through performance. Our work has taken place on the back of other such attempts by other artists working in other media. First by Pippa Skotnes in her numerous publications including, amongst others, *Sound from the thinking strings* (1991), *Heaven's things* (1999), and *Claim to the Country* (2007) and her seminal installation at the South African National Gallery, entitled *Miscast* (1996). Then (and most particularly for our purposes) by Stephen Watson in the poems he has written, initially for Skotnes's publication *Sound from the thinking strings* (Skotnes, 1991), and then in the anthology *Return of the Moon: Versions from the /Xam* (Watson, 1991).

This chapter and the one that follows it reflect on two examples of this work, two dramaturgical responses to the Bleek and Lloyd Collection as a site of memory. The first in the form of a performance work – *Rain in a dead man's footprints* - created to be performed on a stage for an audience (chapter 5), and the second as performance work within a community in which the process of working is focused on more than the final product performed for the audience and in which, in fact, the separation of performer and audience is hard to establish or to sustain (chapter 6).

IN PERFORMANCE

Rain in a dead man's footprints is made up of three different threads, three different stanzas, three different moods or moves that interweave over time. They do not follow one after the other in straight lines but fray, and fold into each other, and overlap and intervene and clash and converse the one with the other, running parallel, leaping over each other, struggling to predominate or have the final say. In other words their relationship is one of syncopation rather than syntax.

One: A nostalgic, melancholic thread that is also about the task at hand, the project of collecting and interpreting stories - of creating the *corpus* - of putting them into books for future generations.

A woman stands on a writing desk in the open air. The desk stands on a large, triangular shaped, mud floor with rows of chairs along two sides. The woman sings:

I come from that place / I come here like this / When the sun was burning / Riding on foot⁶⁸.

A second woman (Lucy) dressed in a costume reminiscent of Victorian undergarments - a corset and hoop skirt - engages the moving bodies of a succession of men (//Kabbo; Dia!kwain). She tries to 'read' off the bodies; struggles to interpret, to make sense of; writes what she reads and understands in books and on papers.

The woman (Lucy) reads out loud from a book:

I am afraid I am getting weaker and weaker, and that the sand of my life is running to an end. Yet I should much like to live on, there is so much which I think I might have done, so many things to be finished; [...] I trust that my wife's sister, Lucy Catherine Lloyd, will kindly assist her in the work of publishing my posthumous papers etc.; and I hereby acknowledge the great help she has been to me in my literary labours. But particularly I request her to continue and work well out our joint Bushman studies, in which her quicker ear, and great industry has been of so important service to science. I appeal to all friends of science to assist her in such ways as they can in her work of collecting, working out, and publishing the records of this dying out race, - the accurate knowledge of whose language and ways seems destined to solve some exceedingly important ethnological questions.

Five other women, copies of the first woman (Lucy) dance in the chairs at the edge of the mud floor: a dance of slow, burdened fatigue – gestures of exhaustion, of load, being weighed down, heaviness. Yet also determined; willing to push on – forward - with some task.

The man (//Kabbo) requests thread to sew in place the buttons she (Lucy) has given him for his coat. He moves; she speaks off his body:

I thought that I would say to you, / I would come to ask my mistress, you, / if you would not give me thread / to sew in place the buttons / you gave me for my jacket. / Without this they will fall off. / Without thread, they will get lost. / And I – I keep on thinking of them, I think, not a little gently, of the beauty / of these buttons that you gave me.

The woman (Lucy) fetches a jar full of buttons but as she brings it into the space it is knocked from her hands by the increasing number of moving bodies around her and the buttons are strewn across the mud floor. The woman (Lucy) and the small group of men whose bodies she has been attempting to 'read' make a desperate attempt

⁶⁸ All quotations in this section are from the unpublished performance text: *Rain in a dead man's footprints* (2004), Cape Town: Magnet Theatre & Jazzart Dance Theatre. The spoken/sung text is made up entirely of fragments from the Bleek and Lloyd Collection archive and/or the poems of Stephen Watson from *Return of the Moon* (1991).

to collect the buttons and to return them to the jar, while all around more and more bodies enter the space in a swirling, spinning, anarchic movement of disruption/interruption. Then in a moment, all are gone and the space is left bare, charged with the after-glow of what has been there only a moment before.

A figure on stilts wearing a mask made from an antelope skull with horns, enters the now quietly, emptied space. A figure of strangeness, reminiscent of the elongated, therianthropes in San rock art: part human, part animal. The man (//Kabbo) approaches and begins a *pas de deux*, a slow, tender, intimate engagement of bodies in silence – the only sound, the amplified breath of the two dancers. The strangeness is recognizable – the two estranged bodies connect in some way; make connection. Then the tall figure of strangeness turns suddenly, surprisingly, without expectation and leaves into the darkness.

Two: A celebratory thread in which the overall nostalgic, melancholic mood of the beginning – the sparsely populated space, marked here and there by ones and twos – gives way to a much more celebratory feeling generated by and through larger choral groups, dancing, singing, clapping, stamping. There is a different sense of ownership of space and material/text; a different claim/ing. And there is also a different sense of place, an ‘other’ place in which the boundaries between things are different, a *Far-off Place*.⁶⁹

In that place, far-off, where //Kabbo once lived, / the sorcerers, dancing, would fall into a trance. / Wanting us to believe that they were no longer men, / our sorcerers would turn themselves into birds - / and we really believed that they were those birds / [...] We lived, then, in a world of men become birds.

In this celebratory section choral singing is predominant. Music sung by many voices in concert. The singing has a way of breaking down language both because of the way words are used in the songs (in fragmentary ways) but also, and more importantly, in the way that the performance, the singing itself, renders the words fluid and sensuous, in the process unhinging them somewhat from their Sense, becoming less and less language and more voice. At the same time, ‘voice calls the other to come out in his own voice’ (Nancy, 1993: 245), a call and response dynamic

⁶⁹ The title of the poem by Stephen Watson from which this fragment is taken.

that builds a sense of community and togetherness but also a feeling of joyful, sustaining energy in the face of difficulty and adversity.

The other is called forth to where there is neither subject nor signification. It is the wilderness of pleasure, or of joy. It is not desolate even if it is arid. It is neither desolate nor consoled. It is beyond either laughter or tears. (Nancy, 1993: 246)

Three: A biographical thread that becomes increasingly political. //Kabbo's story and in particular his relationship to what has been left behind, to his wife, !Kwaba-an, in his homeplace, struggling alone without him, at a loss, not understanding where he is and why he is not returning. She is alone in the performance space, a small figure dwarfed by the empty space around her. They talk to each other in a dream:

She asked me for a smoke/I gave her my pipe but the tobacco was all gone/When I awoke, the sun was up. I was no longer dreaming. My wife and my son were gone.

The relationship of //Kabbo and !Kwaba-an is set off against the //Kabbo-Lucy relationship which is starting to break down, becoming more difficult, discordant. Lucy speaks of struggling to hold on to //Kabbo, of having to find ways to keep him with her in order to finish the task at hand.

In my last Report concerning the Bushman Researches ... I mentioned that unless the inquiries made by me regarding the whereabouts of the wives of the two Bushmen then with me proved successful, I feared that ere long the men would leave me. [...] In fact, it was only by the promise of a greatly longed for reward, that I could induce //Kabbo (whose services as an excellent narrator were most valuable) to make up his mind to remain on ... through the winter.

And then in October 1873, //Kabbo leaves for Victoria West from there to make his way home: 'back to his belongings'.

Dia!kwain arrives to take //Kabbo's place. He tells *The Story of Ruyter*:⁷⁰

Ruyter, brought up by white men – Ruyter died/ amidst white men at a place called Springkaan's Kolk./ He was bound to a wagon with straps from the oxen;/ they tied him face-down because of herding the sheep./ Then the Boer who was master, the Boer began beating/ him with the riem⁷¹ that they used for tying the beast./ He said Ruyter, the herder, had not

⁷⁰ Again the title from the Stephen Watson poem (1991).

⁷¹ Leather strap.

herded well./ This happened, this beating that led to his death./ The Boer hit him and hit him;
the other Boers too./ When at last they unloosed him, Ruyter, he fainted./ Those who were
there – they all must have known,/ they must have known then, when picking him up,/ that
Ruyter, the herder, was near beaten to death.

This is a different kind of story and a different register of telling. It is angrier, harder,
more breathless, as it tells of the herder 'near beaten to death'. The political is much
more obvious, closer to the surface here.

(Spoken) The place has changed,
There is silence now where a song would ring
There is nothing now where it once sounded.

(Sung) Other people came, breaking the strings for me
This earth's not earth
This place has changed
This place has changed

(Spoken) And we were left there then
Our blood used up,
Exhausted.

With these final words ringing in the air and the announcement of the presentation
of 'a report concerning the progress of the Bushman Researches from 1875 to 1884'
to the Secretary of Native Affairs in London on the 8th of May, 1889, a darkness
descends on the space. It is as if a chapter has come to an end. And yet, just as it
seems that this is to be the end, a light flickers in the darkness, a flame erupts
followed by a second and then a third, spinning in the air, partially illuminating the
outlines of figures still alive and moving, however indistinctly, in the darkness.

More and more figures enter the space in the darkness as the music builds,
accompanied by clapping and stamping, until at last it all bursts forth in another
celebration that goes on for nearly twenty minutes of intense and unrelenting dance
and song – all speaking long since vanished/banished - which is both defiant and
celebratory. Finally the whole stage space bursts into flame surrounding the moving
bodies and then all fall silent again, exhausted - but a different kind of exhaustion.

ALONGSIDE PERFORMANCE

In the introduction to this study I proposed a focus on two interlocking themes of time and silence. In this chapter I explore issues of time (which are also issues of space) in /Xam narratives in relation to a contemporary performance event: *Rain in a dead man's footprints* (2004) and its precursor, *The Sun, the Moon, and the Knife* (1995), and a particular understanding of silence that arises from the 'deterritorialization', in Deleuzian terms, of theatre and language (considered central to it), by means of dance. In doing so I will take a journey through translation theory, with a detour to the ideas of Gertrude Stein on 'landscape theatre' in an attempt to shed light on the complex and multifarious relationship between systems of indigenous knowledge and acts of contemporary performance practice in the postcolony. I would like to suggest here that (1) any attempt to find an image in the present for something from the past involves an act of translation; (2) that such acts of translation should resist any form of domestication of the material translated; and, (3) that the introduction of dance into the theatrical space at this particular juncture of the current project, facilitates such a resistant translation.

Translating the Past

"The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there"
(L.P. Hartley in *The Go-Between*, 1953, cited in Lowenthal, 1985: xvi).

I am aware that a project that attempts to translate narratives from a culture that has been exterminated into forms alien to that culture raises important issues of ethics and politics too. Through all our work my collaborators and I have been acutely aware of the fact that the /Xam cannot speak for themselves. And this precisely because our cultural forbears removed this right from them. The exchange of cultures and cultural forms is unequal and monological. As Greg Dening has noted:

There is nothing – not a written down experience, not a myth or a legend, not a material fact, not an archeological site – that does not by the expression of it, by the collection and preservation of it, and/or by the interpretation of it and inclusion of it in a Stranger's discourse, require critical reading to separate the Stranger's cargo from the Native's past.

However, he goes on:

There is no need, because of that, to adopt a know-nothing silence.
(Denning, 1996: 57)

Faced with a choice between perpetuating a silence that has been resounding for decades or giving new voice to the stories of the /Xam, albeit in our 'Stranger's discourse', we have chosen the latter course with all the attendant difficulties and questions, and a willingness to engage with the critical readings required 'to separate the Stranger's cargo from the Native's past'.

So what is at stake when a 'Stranger's discourse' is employed to reflect a 'Native's past'? Which is of course an act of translation. Not only are we using a language foreign to the /Xam but our performances which propose to give life to the stories lying dormant in the archive, do not follow the forms of San storytelling.

In *Return of the Moon*, Stephen Watson translates //Kabbo's words, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, as:

I must first listen, silent, waiting for the stories,
for those I long to hear to come floating to my ears.
I am listening for the road on which I travelled here.
For if one sits and waits, having once walked down a road ,
the stories will come to you – they will follow after. [...]
For a story is the wind. A story is like the wind,
it comes floating through the air from a far-off place. (1991: 72)

Watson's translations from the Bleek and Lloyd Collection focus on those records narrated by the three principle narrators: //Kabbo, /Han#kass'o and Dia!kwain. In the introduction to the anthology, Watson writes that he has tried to 'bring the words of the narrators to life once more, and in such a way that they might continue to speak to us who are alive in the last decade of the twentieth century' motivated by 'Kierkegaard's dictum – that the past that cannot be made present is not worth remembering' (Watson, 1991: 11).

Watson's poem is a second-order translation in that the linguistic translation from the /Xam dialect to English had already been done by Bleek and Lloyd when he set to work. According to Janette Deacon,

Bleek and Lloyd were the only two, out of tens of thousands of Europeans in Southern Africa, who took the trouble to learn a San language and then to write down what the San had to say. The only other recorders of the San language in South Africa were the traveller Dr H. Lichtenstein and two missionaries, the Revd C. F. Wuras and the Revd G. Krönlein, all of whom wrote down only short vocabularies and a few sentences. (1996: 93).

It seems that the first stage of the work, in which Bleek and //Kabbo were most central, involved the production of a phonetic script to describe the various clicks and other details of pronunciation occurring in the /Xam language. This was followed by a period in which Bleek showed //Kabbo various everyday objects and notated //Kabbo's words for those objects in /Xam. It seems that the language of communication at this stage was Dutch (Trail, 1996: 164). Later, as Bleek's work at the Grey Library kept him away from Mowbray for most of the day and his health deteriorated, Lucy Lloyd took over the task of transcribing the narrators' stories. It is also clear that she was most central to the actual act of translating the verbatim /Xam transcriptions into English. It seems too, that the narrators learnt some English during their stay in Mowbray and resorted to enactment when language failed to make their intentions clear.

The records of the Bleek and Lloyd Collection were compiled in the first instance with a philological intention and emphasis. There is no attempt in the records to alter the style of the narration to conform to the literary conventions of the period or to make them more readable for a European audience. There is a halting, discontinuous feel to the flow of the narratives Lucy Lloyd transcribed. There is also a great deal of repetition in the narratives, partly a result of the stop-start nature of the transcription process but also an essential stylistic feature of all oral narrative-performance (Scheub, 1971: 32). Lloyd makes no attempt to simplify or reduce this repetition, unlike her niece, Dorothea, who removed 'wearisome repetitions' from the narratives when she published a selection of them in 1924, 'to make them acceptable to European audiences' (Bleek, D.F., 1924: v).

Any story from an oral tradition would contain many aspects in performance that would be extremely difficult to express in a written form. As Harold Scheub has emphasised, 'the problems of developing literary correspondences for oral non-verbal artistic techniques are staggering, for the translation of a single narrative-performance involves profound transformations which defy equivalence' (1971: 28).

Added to this, the narrative-performances by the narrators at Mowbray were not given in the cultural context from which they arose but in an alien context in which the intention behind the telling had been radically altered and in which the audience played no performative role. As Bleek and Lloyd were not steeped in the culture and narrative tradition of the /Xam, they could not fill in gaps or make connections from the 'epic matrix' – the entire repertory of images existing in the /Xam narrative tradition – or join in with song or dance to assist characterisation and the building up of images. Therefore, the problems Bleek and Lloyd faced in their work were not merely problems of linguistic slippage, as words migrated from /Xam to Dutch (a language which none of the participants spoke well) to English, but problems of loss encountered when oral forms are translated into written words.

Thus, the material Watson encountered in the Bleek and Lloyd Collection was opaque and inaccessible for the contemporary reader. It was also already compromised by the conditions of its recording. Watson's primary aim was to make the material readable for the contemporary audience and he achieved this by 'recasting' it into the forms of contemporary poetry (Scheub, 1971: 36).

In attempting to make //Kabbo's words 'speak to us who are alive in the last decade of the twentieth century', Watson has undertaken what Michael Silverstein calls a 'transduction' in which the 'source semiotic organization' (//Kabbo's story) is reorganized and expressed through another language or discourse genre (Watson's poem) to make it more effective to the target culture. To explain this Silverstein uses the metaphor of an energy transducer such as a hydroelectric generator. In this metaphor, one form of organised energy (flowing water) is asymmetrically converted into another kind of energy (electricity) at a transduction site, harnessing at least some of the original energy in the process for use by a target group (2003: 83). The key point here is that only some of the energy of the source is harnessed for use by the target, in other words something gets lost. Watson's poem might be more user-friendly for a contemporary audience, but what has been lost in the process? How much has the original been altered? For as Silverstein makes clear there is always the risk that the transduction might become an outright transformation in which the source material becomes 'contextualised in

specific ways into configurations of cultural semiosis of a sort substantially or completely different from those one has started with' (2003: 91).

According to the nineteenth-century German theorist, Schleiermacher, a translation functions in either of two modes:

1. the author is brought to the language of the reader;
2. the reader is carried to the language of the author.

(Schleiermacher, 1813, cited in Venuti, 2000: 60)

In our case the 'authors' of the stories are the /Xam informants and the 'readers' the contemporary audience. If we were to follow the first mode, the source material would need to be 'domesticated' in order to become intelligible to the contemporary audience. In other words the cultural and social conditions of the original text would have to be excluded or concealed in order to provide the illusion of transparency and immediate intelligibility for the contemporary audience (Rubel & Rosman, 2003: 9-10).

When we embarked on the production of *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife* in 1995 we based our work on Watson's *Return of the Moon*. I selected a number of poems to be spoken or set to music or used to inspire dance and interspersed these with a few archival documents to create a sense of context. The text focused on Bleek and //Kabbo as dramatic characters and on their relationship, apparently fraternal and collegial but also filled with ambivalence and contradiction. Bleek's attitudes and intentions were undoubtedly shaped and limited by the racial and cultural prejudices of his time and his project with the /Xam 'conformed to the colonial imperatives of containment, surveillance and subjugation' (Hall, 1996: 147). Yet there is also evidence of a contradictory humanism in the relationship of the Bleek/Lloyd family and //Kabbo and his extended family.⁷² For their part, the

⁷² Bleek was concerned for the well-being of his narrators. He constantly sought more funds from the colonial government to improve their living conditions in Mowbray. He made sure they were well fed and clothed and the coat he gave //Kabbo seemed to have been prized by the latter. Bleek also gave //Kabbo a gun which //Kabbo greatly desired to help him avoid starvation (Bleek & Lloyd, 1911: 316-7). Yet these actions on Bleek's part could also be interpreted as anxious attempts to prevent his narrators from leaving, a possibility that worried him constantly. To counter this concern he tried to bring their wives to Cape Town, a strategy that was only partially successful.

narrators seemed to recognise the historical importance of remaining in Mowbray to complete their task.⁷³ Many elected to stay after their prison terms had been served despite an evident longing for home. As Martin Hall comments, the narrators:

were not merely passive victims of cultural hegemony. They knew why they wanted to be in Mowbray and, after their sentences, were free to leave if they wished – given Bleek and Lloyd's intellectual dedication to their work, a source of considerable power in the Mowbray households. (1996: 158)

In the production, *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife*, the characters of Bleek and //Kabbo were introduced to a contemporary character through whose eyes the audience experienced the unfolding narrative. The characters were constructed in a uniform and consistent way and their unfolding consciousnesses became both subject and structuring principle of the performance.

The dramaturgical structure – and thus the conception of space and time – was linear and chronological. Dawn Langdown played a young vandal who breaks into a library intent on burning it to the ground. Unbeknownst to her, the library is haunted by the spirits of Wilhelm Bleek and the /Xam who sweep her up in the midst of her arson and take her back in time to be confronted with the cultural legacy of the San and their annihilation as a result of colonial expansion. The piece ended with the speaking of the poem *Return of the Moon* – part of which has been quoted above – which evokes //Kabbo's desire to return home which paralleled the contemporary character's journey of self-discovery. At the centre of the piece was

In the writings of Bleek and Lloyd there exists an evident respect towards the culture of the /Xam and towards the narrators themselves. From an early stage, in official documents, Bleek referred to //Kabbo as 'most intelligent' and an 'excellent narrator' and the stories he told as 'literature' not 'folklore'. According to Godby, Bleek's photographic records of //Kabbo seem to shift from a degrading ethnographic style very popular at the time, to a style more in keeping with the conventions of European portraiture. This, Godby suggests, was an attempt on Bleek's part to present a more humane image of a man he had come to admire and respect (Godby, 1996: 125).

For a more detailed examination of the relationship between Bleek and Lloyd and the /Xam informants see the articles by Martin Hall, Michael Godby and Janette Deacon in Skotnes, P. (ed.), 1996.

⁷³ The relationship between Bleek and Lloyd and the informants in Mowbray seems to be an excellent example of what Mary Louise Pratt defines as a 'contact zone':

The space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict. [...] It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized ... in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within, radically asymmetrical relations of power. (Pratt, 1992: 8)

the narrative of the /Xam shifting from a positive pole in which the mythology and cosmology of the society was whole and intact, to a negative pole of dispossession and extermination. This was framed by the contemporary narrative in which the vandal character shifted from a negative pole of cultural disinheritance and vacuity, to a positive pole of cultural and historical enlightenment. Thus, the structure consisted of two parallel narrative lines proceeding in a linear fashion even though the contemporary character had to go backwards in time in order to move forwards and Bleek and the /Xam had to move forwards beyond their deaths in order to allow the contemporary world (both character and audience) to reflect backwards. In addition, all the episodes were linked by a coherent causality built around a logical chronology.

In other words, the narrative of the /Xam had been shaped to fit within a literary dramatic structure – the compressed, climactic plot structure – which reflected a singularity of purpose and direction, a homogeneous sense of reality and an adherence to cause and effect. Watson's poetic translations and our re-workings of those translations rendered what had been an opaque source material into an intelligible and transparent text for an audience schooled in, or at least familiar with, the conventions of Western drama. The author had been brought to the language of the reader. However, in order to achieve this, much about the social and cultural conditions of the source text – the ideas and ways of thinking and being of the /Xam – was excluded or concealed.

In 2004, as part of the current study and after the productions of *53 Degrees* and *Onnest'bo*, I returned to the stories of the /Xam to create a new piece: *Rain in a dead man's footprints*. It was clear that too much time had passed since *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife* to simply repeat what had been done in 1995. It was an opportunity to translate the material once more and this time I decided to explore Schleiermacher's second mode of translation in which the reader is carried to the language of the author. In other words, to create a dramaturgy that took greater cognisance of the social and cultural conditions of the original texts and that forced the audience out of its conventional perceptions and expectations and into those of the authors – the /Xam. This would involve an attempt – contrary to Watson's poetic project and our intentions in *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife* - to reflect the

'otherness' of the source material through a 'resistive' or 'foreignizing' translation emphasizing difference and opacity (Venuti, 1998: 5).

According to Walter Benjamin, quoting Rudolf Pannwitz, the basic error of translation occurs when a translator preserves the state 'in which his own language happens to be, instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. [...] He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language' (Benjamin 1955a/1968: 81). With this in mind I set out to answer the question: in what ways could my language of the theatre be expanded and deepened by unlocking the knowledge inherent in the narratives of the /Xam?⁷⁴

As part of the dramaturgical process, I revisited Watson's poems but this time I cast a stronger eye on the original sources in the Bleek and Lloyd Collection and foraged through a wider range of supporting archival documents and critical texts. My first objective was to explore a structure more reflective of San culture and society that according to Mathias Guenther is 'fluid, loose, and labile-like; a society ... lacking in a structural "centre"' (1999: 5). My dramaturgical project was informed by a specific investigation of representations of time and space in San narratives undertaken together with Pippa Skotnes (Skotnes & Fleishman, 2002). As a result of this research we concluded that in San narratives:

- the sense of consequence is unexpected;
- the past is brought into the present unproblematically;
- there are no distinctions between the magical and the banal;
- linear, chronological development is replaced by an almost perpetual present.

It seems that for the San multiple time-bands coexist in space rather than following one after another. Three such bands can be identified in the narratives of the Bleek and Lloyd Collection:

⁷⁴ By language of the theatre I mean that process by which images are built up out of available signifying systems – spoken text, physical gesture, decor and costumes, lighting and sound, other visual effects such as projections etc. – and then manipulated structurally in order to convey feeling and meaning.

- Early Time (First order): the time of the first Bushmen when things were different from how they became. There were no distinctions between humans and animals. In fact, the landscape of the early time was a landscape populated by strange and mercurial creatures, part human, part animal, part neither, creatures now referred to as therianthropes.
- After Time (Second Order): the time when animals became wild and lost their humanity. People developed laws, customs, beliefs and their human forms and the heavenly bodies were fixed in the sky.

(But the creatures of the Early Time invaded the present of the After Time bringing with them the past so that the past continued to exert an influence over the present).

- Colonial Time: the time when settlers invaded the land, when Dutch began to be heard and when lives began to be lost through the actions of farmers and the commandos. Also the time in which the Bleek and Lloyd collection was assembled.

To the three outlined above we can and must add a fourth time-band:

- Contemporary Time: our time, the time from which we come; from which vantage we perceive the San and the time from which the audience regards the performance.

For the San, it seems, these bands do not follow each other sequentially but exist simultaneously distributed in space. Multiple planes of reality merge into one landscape – a landscape of unexpected consequence, a hybrid space of past and present, magical and banal, all at once, in an always-changing ever-presentness. And the whole arranged not by temporal progression but by spatial relatedness and

design. In this way, the spatial principle replaces the temporal principle. This is not to say that time is abandoned only that it is transfigured into space.

Such an understanding of the time/space nexus is reminiscent of the ways in which Gertrude Stein understood the making of 'plays' as related to the idea of landscape. For Stein:

The landscape has its formation and as after all a play has to have a formation and be in relation one thing to the other thing and as the story is not the thing as everyone is always telling something then the landscape not moving but being always in relation, the trees to the hills, the hills to the fields, the trees to each other, any piece of it to any sky and then any detail to any other detail, the story is only of importance if you like to tell or like to hear a story but the relation is there anyway. (Stein, 1971: 78)

In other words, the central dramaturgical principle for Stein is not the sensible progression of narrative episodes and theatrical signifiers through time but the relatedness of such episodes and signifiers in space. It is an understanding of dramaturgy inspired more by the visual than the verbal. But this does not mean it is devoid of language. It simply means that the language of her plays – for they were plays filled to the brim with language – is composed in space as a painter might compose elements in a landscape.

For Stein, as for the San storytellers so many centuries before her, the landscape 'moves, but it also stays' (Stein, 1971: 81). It is a construction of space embodying time. In such narrative constructions 'characters wander in time as if it were space' (Carlson, 2002: 150). That is, if they are characters at all, for in Stein, as in those theatre artists who follow in her footsteps (Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Elizabeth Le Compte etc.), the human figure is no longer the central or predominant focus but one element in a diverse landscape. Characters are no longer conceived of as psychologically rounded, whole and uniform but as representative of fragmented subjectivities, labile and shifting, or indicative of the codes and social options available in a given society. As Richard Foreman describes it, 'characterological objects in a field crowded with things' (cited in Fuchs, 1996: 102).

Such a crowded field requires a focus from the spectator that is no longer 'convergent' but 'darting or diffuse, noting some configurations, missing others, or absorbing all in a heterogeneous gaze' (Fuchs, 1996: 92). It suggests a

phenomenological spectatorship that involves surveying the entire field and bracketing off understanding in favour of a sensual immersion.

So, from our readings of the poems and their original sources and the fragments collected from my foraging activities in the critical texts that circle the archive, we created sets of images – physical, visual, verbal, musical – and bits and pieces of character, corresponding to each of the four time bands outlined above. We focused on Lucy Lloyd toiling away in the footprints of her dead brother-in-law, burdened by her inheritance of this important project of preservation, suffering from ill-health, fighting against time as her sources disappeared before her eyes. And then on her relationship with the three main narrators: //Kabbo, /Han#kass'o and Dia!kwain, their wives and families. Unlike in *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife*, however, these were not whole characters but shards, never thickening into characters – five performers representing Lucy Lloyd; narrators not overly identified with their historical antecedents – not central and predominant but part of a heterogeneous field of signification.

I then set about composing these time-band images as a landscape according to spatial rather than temporal principles. The relatedness of the images was not governed by a story structure based on cause and effect but by other, less logical, more confrontational impulses and ideas – ideas based on juxtaposition rather than progression; syncopation rather than syntax. The overall ambition was to create a landscape in which multiple realities could co-exist, simultaneously, in a less explained, more mysterious way, forcing the audience to engage with the 'otherness' of the material and the complexity of its social and cultural origins. Carrying the reader to the language of the authors.

As we worked however, the inevitability of time kept asserting itself. Theatre performances do begin at one point in time and end at another and no amount of insistence on spatial principles of dramaturgical design alters this. In addition, audiences have a tendency to impose temporal patterns on sets of signifiers regardless of artistic intentions to the contrary. To counteract this impulse and to disturb logical consequence, I introduced into the dramaturgical landscape the principle of discontinuity or interruption. I proposed a technique that became known as 'scrambling'. I described it as similar to the action of a DJ scratching the

needle, jumping from one point to another in the music in an abrupt discontinuous kind of way without sense or explanation. In our 'scrambles', contemporary images were introduced in quite a violent and abrasive way to interrupt the spatial flow. This had the effect of bringing things to an abrupt end and forcing the performers to reset themselves and to begin anew. In this way the present struggled to become the future and remained a series of new beginnings and fresh starts.

I felt that these 'scrambles' were reflective of the abrupt jumps in time and reality in the stories of the /Xam – of the havoc wreaked by /Kaggen, the trickster. They were also reflective of the process through which //Kabbo, /Han=kass'o and Dia!kwain, and the other narrators, were forced to narrate their stories so that they could be written down, constantly being interrupted and asked to repeat themselves, patiently waiting while literal translations were transcribed. And, importantly, they emphasised what Venuti calls:

A translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity [that] can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures. (1995: 305)

Gertrude Stein favoured the evocative over the descriptive. She was less interested in *describing* 'what happened' than in *uncovering* 'what happened'. The performance text we created for *Rain in a dead man's footprints* is about stories without necessarily becoming a story itself. It is an evocation of a landscape, an uncovering which sets out to reveal and celebrate the mystery and difference of the /Xam for an audience located in the here and now. Hopefully, in doing this, it never forgets that it is a translation – an image of a 'Native's past', heavily inflected by a 'Stranger's cargo', presented in a 'Stranger's discourse'.

The (Be)coming of Dance

"...language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it. [...] To drill one hole after the other into it until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through."
(Samuel Beckett in *Letter to Axel Kaun*, 9 July 1937, 2009: 518).

"I look only at the movements"
(Søren Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling*, 1843/1985: 67).

The performance of *Rain in a dead man's footsteps* is characterised by a collection of doublings or pairings that are sometimes in sync and sometimes diverging – a kind of deliberate ghosting effect. For example there is the doubling of word-texts that occur throughout the performance, spoken in different registers, touching up against each other in complex, often strange and difficult ways:

- Archival documents - the words of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd themselves, from letters, reports etc.
- Fragments of the verbatim recordings made by Bleek and Lloyd of the words of //Kabbo and the other narrators.
- Poetic re-workings of those narrations by the contemporary poet, Stephen Watson.
- Songs composed by Neo Muyanga that are sometimes re-workings of Watson's poetry and sometimes re-workings of the raw archival fragments.

Then there is the musical doubling – a clashing of classic and contemporary musical styles and Western and African instrumentation.

But the most prominent and obvious doubling is that of theatre and dance. While the first two productions examined in this study have sat quite unproblematically in the realm of theatre (albeit physical and not determined in advance by a dramatic text) and all those who participated would define themselves as of the theatre, theatre workers of one kind or another, whether actors or directors etc., in this production another element, dance, is introduced through the partnership with the Jazzart Dance Theatre. It is my contention that the introduction of dance into this third project and into *Cargo* that follows it is significant in a number of ways not least because of my focus on speaking the unspeakable, on making the archive speak in unspeakable ways.

The doubling of theatre and dance is to some extent at least concerned with the relationship of the spoken and the moved/embodied/gestured. It could be argued that all theatre as embodied form is concerned with this relationship

between the spoken and the moved/gestured, however I would suggest that the relationship is more pronounced, more to the fore when dancing bodies encounter acting bodies in the theatrical space. What emerges in this piece is a shifting relationship, sometimes explanatory - where there is a sense of congruency between the articulated word and the gesture or the movement - but at other times, and far more often, more obfuscatory, incongruous, divergent - where there is no apparent connection between word and movement - a refusal of the physical to illustrate or to be illustrated or of the words to explain.

I would like to suggest here that the introduction of dance achieves two main things:

- first, a 'deterritorialization' of language (after Deleuze and Guattari) - it breaks down the language of the sensible and replaces it with a language of sensuousness/sensation that leads toward a particular kind of poetry that while having little to do with poems has much to do with a kind of silence;
- second, a 'reassembling of the social' (after Latour, 2005) through the bringing together of bodies in touch.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari propose a number of 'theorems of deterritorialization' (1980/1987: 174). Amongst these we find the following:

First theorem: One never deterritorializes alone; there are always at least two terms. (174)

Theorem Five: deterritorialization is always double, because it implies the coexistence of a major variable and a minor variable in simultaneous becoming (the two terms of a becoming do not exchange places, there is no identification between them, they are instead drawn into an asymmetrical block in which both change to the same extent, and which constitutes their zone of proximity). (306)

The two terms under discussion here are of course theatre and dance and my contention is that the dance undoes something that defines the territory of the theatre but without becoming theatre or replacing theatre. In other words, deterritorialization never implies becoming one in the manner of that overused term, the hybrid. It is the proximity of the two terms, the dynamics of their touch, that is at play here, not their joining.

It is my contention that the insertion of the dancing body into the theatrical space is to some extent at least, like the insertion of a foreign object into the body, it brings its own dynamics, its own poetics and erotics and interrupts the Sense of theatre, its own particular sense in particular ways. While it cannot be ignored, it can also not be easily assimilated. The introduction of the foreign (dance) triggers responses designed to protect the integrity of the body (theatre) - theatre and its historical quest for signification, for a Sense that is a straight line joining two points, a sense in search of a terminus or a destination. It tries desperately to make sense of the bodies, to interpret them to capture them in writing. Dance on the other hand performs an interruption, a cut across the language of theatre, it frees the line from the point and offers a different possible sense of sense – ‘No longer bodies that make sense, but sense that engenders and shares bodies’ (Nancy, 1993: 197). In this way the sensible becomes an erotics rather than a semantics, representing ‘not primarily a pathos of desire but a syntax of feeling’ (Nancy, 2006: 113).⁷⁵

In other words, with the introduction of the dance, ‘thought and writing [is] ... given over to bodies’ where bodies are understood in Nancy’s terms as erotic ‘discharges’ of writing rather than surfaces to be written on in semantic ways (1993: 198). What they have to say is not on the surface it is inside in the interior of the body, discharged through the body’s presence, through its movement and gesturing, through its simple fact of being, the way it presents itself in spacetime. This is a kind of writing ‘that will never tell the signification of bodies, nor ever reduce the body to

⁷⁵ It is important to stress here along with Nancy that when we point to the ‘undoing of sense’ we are pointing to ‘the truth of sense that is no sense, but not any “nonsense” either, the truth of sense as its body, matter – and its matter as caesura’ (2006: 115).

its sign' (197). It is the writing of the voice of silence⁷⁶ that exists on the outside of language, 'an exact cut across the horizon of language, an outline traced at the margin of language' (Nancy, 2006: 20), and in this sense it is poetry: 'not a literary genre as such, but the limit of "literature", of "writing" where nothing is written but the coming of a presence, a coming that can never be written or presented in any way' (Nancy, 1993: ix-x).

In her article, *The Shape of Enthusiasm*, Erin Manning (2011) attempts to shed light on what she defines as 'a language beneath the sounding of words ... [that] marks the underneath of wording, the language that is mute and sounding of expressions in the shaping, of becomings-with in the beyond of articulation' (2011: 84-5).⁷⁷ She attempts to make use of the experience of autism to gain purchase on 'the language we speak when we hear our voice in the silence' (85). She focuses on the idea of 'autistic shapes', the 'non-object oriented realm of pre-conscious experience' that autists describe, to shed light on the complexity of all experience, autistic or otherwise, that exists beyond the 'linguistic order'. For Manning 'the shaping of experience in the making is dynamic and amodal – active in the pre-conscious where language is not-yet' (86). She argues that autists have the ability to stay with the shaping; they are 'capable of slowing-down the process of shifting-to-content' whereas non-autists tend to want to jump immediately to language, always desirous of 'shifting-to-content' (87). In this space before the shift-to-content, the space of the not-yet-formed, there is always more going on, 'beneath or in excess of words ... more than the form of its communicability' (88). To grasp this further, Manning turns to the work of Fernand Deligny in the 1960s with autistic children and his attempt to move away from the pathologizing of 'those who cannot speak the dominant language' (Manning, 2011: 88). Deligny's project:

is not to make autists more "like us" – to make them speak or act within the communicational matrix of societal expectation – but to make perceptible enthusiasms in the shaping,

⁷⁶ Of course this is not a literal silence in which there is no sound to be heard. There is much sound present: music, song, fragments of words spoken, audible breathing, the sound of feet stamping on earth, but in the way of poetry it is resistant to language – to the formation of Sense. In Nancy's terms 'what resists with poetry ... is that which, in or within language, announces or keeps more than language. [...] [T]he articulation that precedes language in itself' (2006: 17).

⁷⁷ Here she draws on the work of Amanda Baggs (2010).

trajectories in the tracing. [...] Over the years, this project begins to create a singular iteration in the form of maps, or tracings as Deligny calls them [...] incipient cartographies of a movement-with of spacetime in its emergence. (89)

The language here is reminiscent of the previous section on translation with regard to Venuti's concept of 'resistive' or 'foreignizing' translations emphasizing difference and opacity (1998: 5), translations 'based on an aesthetic of discontinuity [that] can best preserve that difference, that otherness, ... the unbridgeable gaps between cultures' and in our sense, I would suggest, between the past and the present (Venuti 1995: 305).

The tracings in Deligny's project, the 'incipient cartograph[y] of a movement-with of spacetime in its emergence', also resonate with the way in which dance operates vis-à-vis theatre in the production - staying with the shaping and slowing down the shifting-to-content. In this way, by staying in the silence outside of language, it interrupts theatre's drive to form and to Sense, forcing it to remain in the middle of a line that is freed from points of origin, points of destination; a line free to drift. This is a space where 'bodies are not yet constituted' (Manning, 2011: 85), a fluid space of encounter where form is still being negotiated, still in process.

Furthermore the idea of tracing points to the nature of the intended result in the production itself, the kind of image we are seeking in the present for the event of the past, because, as I have made clear before, what is being proposed is not a repetition or recreation of the past but a particular kind of refiguration. This is a refiguration that implies not the making of a thing but the tracing of an outline. What we are searching for are forms of practice and of articulation, modes of sensibility that trace particular outlines, bring things to visibility not as forms or objects but as Deleuze suggests in his discussion of Foucault referred to in chapter 3, 'forms of luminosity which are created by the light itself and allow a thing or object to exist only as a flash, sparkle or shimmer' (1986/1988: 52). Such outlines are for Nancy:

no longer within the continuum of sense, sense standing out, in this sense, and not as an object of discourse. It is sense, if you will, as inflexion (as in the inflexion of a voice, or a tone, whether being raised, lowered, or sustained; and in the sense of inflection as backward turn instead of a straight line, a kind of folding rather than syntax, and so on). (Nancy 2006: 17-18)

All the bodies present/ed in the space, all the moving, dancing bodies, are simply outlines/traces formed around the absence of all the other bodies that are not present, that have been lost, exterminated, annihilated, destroyed by time and circumstance and by design. But just because they are outlines doesn't make them any less real or tangible in themselves or to those who watch.

These shimmering figures, these outlines constitute 'a community of bodies' (Nancy, 1993: 190), but a community not yet formed, still in process, open to expansion, to the possibility of a remembering that is a putting back together, a 'reassembling of the social' (Latour, 2005). These are very different bodies, bodies foreign to each other, strange but also familiar - an uncanny and 'recognizable strangeness ... a recognition that one would have to say is *estranged*' (Nancy 1996/2000: 69-70, emphasis in original). But they are also dependent, in exchange, these bodies engaged in relations of intimacy and of tension and of joint endeavor. Such relations are, I would suggest, indicative of Mary Louise Pratt's idea of the 'contact zone' - 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths' - referred to in the discussion of the relation between bodies and things in the previous chapter (Pratt, 1991: 33). Here the contact zone is between body and body, two different bodies - from different cultures but also from different times - encountering each other but struggling to occupy the same space simultaneously:

Not you and me at the same time in the space where I speak, in the place where you listen.
(Nancy 1993: 189)

How do they address each other, these bodies? How do they touch? How might they be touched by? For if what is proposed here is a writing 'given over to bodies', then reading has to be understood not as decipherment, for there are no ciphers, but as 'touching, as being touched' (Nancy, 1993: 198). The strategy employed is Contact Improvisation - partner work - lifting, holding, supporting, sharing weight,

balancing, suspending.⁷⁸ Bodies in close proximity, touch, then move away, then return, come back - relations of near and far or further away; in and out; up and down; of risk and rejection and reward. Each contact sequence is an aggregate of expression that creates motifs across the landscape – what Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987: 323) call a 'refrain' and which Manning suggests is 'expressive of a singular spacetime, yet metastable, expressive always in a dance of modulation' (2008: 1). And each sequence is also 'a block of sensations, a pure being of sensation', a felt intensity that is composed of more than actual articulation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994: 167). Each encounter, beyond the contours and dynamics of the actual physical relation and articulation, is full of what Manning calls 'affective tone ... an environmental resonance of a feeling-in-action, a vibratile force that makes the milieu felt' (2008: 4). And for Manning '[t]he final cause of a feeling is the beginning of a society, a complex aggregate of forces and tendencies' (2008: 6).

A community of bodies in process, not yet formed, outside of language; a voice in the silence, a silent poetry of movement tracing the outline of an image in the present for an absence that is nonetheless present, a shimmering luminosity - a becoming-present.

But 'of course, failure is given at the outset, and intentionally so' (Nancy, 1993: 190). Failure is built into the very being of theatre/performance. It is there at the beginning. It cannot be avoided or refused yet it is paradoxically a part of performance's possibility, its future, its presence, its persistence or continuation. In Beckett's words 'No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better' (Beckett, 1983/1996: 89). And yet, paradoxically, for Nancy, 'Everything is possible. Bodies resist. The community of bodies resists. The grace of a body offering itself is always possible' (1993: 197).

⁷⁸ 'Contact Improvisation is an evolving system of movement based on the communication between two moving bodies and their combined relationship to the physical laws that govern their motion – gravity, momentum and inertia. The body, in order to open to these sensations, must learn to release excess muscular tension and abandon a certain quality of willfulness to experience the natural flow of movement' (Paxton and others. 1979: 18).

CHAPTER 6: PLAYING WITH FIRE (*THE CLANWILLIAM ARTS PROJECT, 2001-ONGOING*)

"I seemed then to travel back to those unrecorded ages when communities and families sat huddled beneath the undeciphered sky, gazing into the mystery of fire. [...] It was uncertainty, the unknown, the darkness, and the unquenchable fire in the human breast which made that a time of dread enchantments. And the masters of enchantment, of bringing the dark sky and the howling dark within the realm of the bearable, the masters of keeping terror at bay, were the storytellers."
(Ben Okri, in *A Way of Being Free*, 1997: 34-5)

"... even dust can burst into flames."
(Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition*, 1959: 148)⁷⁹

This is a rogue chapter. It inserts itself into any semblance of a line or the unfolding sequence of petals in the 'anthematic' structure that might exist. It interrupts; operates as an interstice. It could perhaps have been inserted anywhere along the line but I have chosen to put it here because of its connection to the preceding chapter through the Bleek and Lloyd Archive.

As my project developed over time from one production to another, from 53 *Degrees* in 2002, to *Onnest'bo* stretching from the end of the same year through to 2006 in various iterations, to *Rain in a dead man's footprints* in 2004 and 2005 and then *Cargo* in 2007 (to be covered in the next chapter), a second strand of the work has continued in parallel beginning way back in 2001 and repeating each year since and continuing still each year: the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*. This is the second focus on the Bleek and Lloyd archive. In the way it repeats each year it epitomises the particular contribution performance makes in the present to remembering the past – persistent, active and embodied return to the same event.

⁷⁹ Here Arendt is referring to a poem by Rilke: 'Magic' (1924) translated by J. L. Mood. 'From indescribable transformation flash/ such creations --: Feel! and trust!/ We suffer it often: flames become ash;/ yet, in art: flames come from dust'.

The project is different from the others in the series. All the other projects are professional productions performed for paying audiences in and outside of mainstream theatre spaces in metropolitan Cape Town. The *Clanwilliam Arts Project* on the other hand is an 8-day arts residency for school learners in the rural town of Clanwilliam free for all who wish to participate on a voluntary basis.

THE PLACE

Clanwilliam lies approximately 300 kilometres from Cape Town on the N7 highway that runs to Namibia in the north, up the western side of the country. It lies inland, about 60 kilometres from the coast in the foothills of the Cederberg mountains. It has been permanently settled since 1725 and was originally known as Jan Disselsvalleij. Sir John Cradock changed it to Clanwilliam in 1814, naming it after his father-in-law, the Earl of Clanwilliam. It is a small town of a few thousand inhabitants and like all rural South African towns it is split down the middle; on one side an affluent area mostly occupied by the minority white population known as the town and on the other side, a sprawling, run-down area of newish matchbox houses, crumbling cottages and shacks occupied by the majority black population, known as the location or township. Clanwilliam is surrounded by farmland – rooibos tea and citrus - and wilderness area. It has a fast developing tourism market growing around wild flowers in springtime and the extensive rock art in the surrounding wilderness areas.

The rock art is evidence of the fact that the area was inhabited for centuries prior to the colonial arrival by the /Xam.⁸⁰ The University of Cape Town (UCT) has established a field-station in Clanwilliam to house students doing fieldwork in the area and to provide a base for *The Living Landscape Project*, a permanent heritage and job-creation project for local inhabitants who are trained to become rock art guides and craft workers.⁸¹ The *Clanwilliam Arts Project* is located at this field-station each year.

⁸⁰ See note 62, chapter 5.

⁸¹ See <http://www.clip.uct.ac.za/index.htm> for more details.

The project involves about 500-700 learners from the town, almost entirely from the township. Each year about 35 facilitators are involved from various creative disciplines: lecturers and students from the UCT Fine Art and Drama departments, dancers from the *Jazzart Dance Theatre* and its rural off-shoot, *Namjive*, and members of *Magnet Theatre*, my own professional theatre company.

The objectives of the project are three-fold:

- To provide access to the arts for learners who have been denied access in the past.
- To train student facilitators to work in rural community contexts in arts development.
- To attempt to reclaim the heritage of the /Xam by re-connecting story and landscape and by putting that heritage to work in the community.

HERITAGE

This final project objective introduces a term that has not entered the discussion so far: 'heritage'. What is understood by heritage and how is it different to the term I have been using: 'history'?

In his book *The Heritage Industry* (1987), Robert Hewison suggests that heritage is a 'word without definition' that has been commonly connected to notions of materiality, inheritance, preservation and tangibility (31). For David Lowenthal:

heritage represents what we have almost lost and what we wish to call on as proof of who we are and where we wish to go in the future. Identifying what constitutes heritage and assigning heritage value is thus a deeply subjective process. It happens in the context of current national and international social trends and politics, and often favours certain groups over others. (Lowenthal, 1996: ix-x)

According to Francis P. McManamon, drawing on Lowenthal (1996), heritage involves the association of people and communities 'with places that commemorate the past' and history involves the generation of knowledge about the past by academic historians and archaeologists (2002: 31). For Lowenthal, 'History explores

and explain pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes' (1996: xi).

So from the above it seems that heritage is a contested term that involves a connection with place; a relationship with the past and its preservation; works to achieve objectives in the present that are often based on collective identity formation; and, might involve the knowledge and participation of people who are not professional academics. In the past there has been a tendency to associate heritage with tangible remains: buildings, sculptures, vases, rock art etc. More recently there has been something of a rush to claim and emphasise 'intangible' forms of heritage.

Intangible heritage consists of the oral traditions, memories, languages, traditional performing arts or rituals, knowledge systems, values and know-how that we want to safeguard and pass on to future generations. It is essential not to lose our ancient knowledge, especially the traditional and indigenous knowledge that has been marginalised for so long; we need to remember and value more recent heritage too, such as the oral histories of people who lived under apartheid. Communities are the mode of creation and transmission of intangible heritage and thus are critical to its survival. (Deacon, H and others, 2004: 6)

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recognised in its commentary and recommendations in 1999 that 'symbolic acts [...] have a potency and significance beyond what is apparent' and argued that heritage practices and institutions should 'celebrate different aspects of the past' allowing more voices to be heard – multiple experiences and interpretations of the country's history (cited in Flynn & King, 2007, 463). This was to be understood as part of an ongoing project of nation-building based on the notion of a common citizenship rather than racial difference.

However, as I write this, South Africa remains a divided country with major disparities. Poverty and inequality persist in ever increasing dimensions, to some degree brought on by distortions that emanate from the apartheid era, or by misguided policies of the new government or a lack of adequate implementation of well-intended policies. Despite the understanding stated above of the need to use heritage as a transformative project, the heritage industry in South Africa remains largely untransformed. The conception of heritage remains conservative and based on the preservation of artefacts and in buildings, most around the major

metropolitan cities. There is also a penchant for the building of new monuments coupled with a reluctance to do away with old ones. It is against this background that the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* needs to be considered.

My intention in this chapter is manifold.⁸² First to suggest, with reference to the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*, that heritage, far from being a preservation of the past, an obsession with 'authentic [...] physical relics and remains' (Harvey, 2001: 336), is an event. It is an event in two senses:

1. It is something we *do* in the present with the past for our present purposes. It is an active, participatory and performative process - or perhaps a set of such processes - and involves an embodied engagement with what remains from the past in order to make meaning in the present (Harvey, 2001; Smith, L., 2006). It is, therefore, never inert, always contestable, open to engagement and constant re-working.
2. It is, in Alain Badiou's terms, something that has the capacity to change the situation; to bring something new into being, a new way of seeing the world (Badiou, 1993/2001: 41).

Second, to insist on the connection between heritage as an event and the notions of place and landscape. In this sense the practice of heritage in the postcolony involves experiences in particular places about particular places that are either pregnant with particular pasts or in which particular pasts have been silenced.⁸³ Third, because in this project the dramaturgy has moved off-stage into the *Socius* - the social space - and the 'community of bodies' is no longer separated into those who perform and those who watch, to suggest that collective participation in the event offers possibilities for aspects of the past to become catalysts of change in the present, thereby introducing a political dimension to the project of remembering that is in

⁸² By enumerating it here I do not mean to suggest that the argument will necessarily proceed in an ordered/orderly fashion. In fact, as we shall see later on, disorder is a feature of this project.

⁸³ In the previous chapter I made a point of the fact that this site of memory (the Bleek and Lloyd Collection) is not a place but a collection of stories. In this version of the work the collection of stories is brought back to a place; re-inserted into a landscape.

part, at least, a result of its affective force and the creation of 'beautiful radiant things' (Goldman, 2006: 42 cited in Thompson, 2009: 1). In other words, what I am suggesting overall is that the practice of heritage in the postcolony exists at the intersection of performance, place/landscape and the aesthetico-politics of the social.⁸⁴

What then do I mean by place and landscape and how do they relate the one to the other? Jeff Malpas (2008) argues that place is a complex term that has at least three possible definitions. Firstly, place is a 'simple location' with a fixed and objective set of co-ordinates on the surface of the earth. Secondly, place is a 'significant locale' with characteristics and identity specific to that place as opposed to any other. Thirdly, place is an 'existential ground', meaning that to be is always to be in place. In this sense, place is the ground of human existence. Our being is related to the specificity of our surroundings, the places in which we live (200-5).⁸⁵ He goes on to argue that place is indeed a combination of all of these and furthermore that it is essentially dynamic and relational. It is a matrix of interconnections and interactivity in which things happen or in which we experience the world. This resonates with Doreen Massey's idea of 'the event of place' that she defines as 'the simple sense of coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing. This is place as open and as internally multiple' (2005, 141).

This latter point leads us on to the way in which Tim Ingold understands landscape: 'the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them' (2000, 193). Ingold argues that places are not small component parts of a bigger landscape; they are embodiments of the whole landscape 'at a particular nexus within it' (192). Furthermore places in

⁸⁴ Or perhaps Felix Guattari's 'ethico-aesthetics' (1995).

⁸⁵ Edward Casey (1997b) argues that in Western philosophy in the modern era, the distinction between place and space has been 'hidden' so that place has been reduced to a position within extended space. Recently, partly as a result of a sense of the loss of place through the processes of globalisation, more attention has been focused on place as a concept separate from space. For a recent summary of this increased focus on place see particularly Casey (1997a); Malpas (1999) and Cresswell (2004). It is also worth noting here that in his discussion of space and place, De Certeau (1980/1984) reverses the commonly held position that place is a location in space that people have made meaningful. For De Certeau, spaces are 'practiced places' filled with the ongoing stories of those who dwell therein (in this sense he resonates with Ingold's ideas on landscape) while places indicate a fixed and stable position or locality prior to human engagement (117). Escobar (2001) in turn sees 'the reassertion of place [...] as an important arena for rethinking and reworking eurocentric forms of analysis' (141).

the landscape are significant because of the activities that they give rise to. In other words, it is through human engagement or dwelling that the significance of a particular place is made manifest. And this dwelling activity – or ‘taskscape’ to use Ingold’s terminology – is embodied, meaning, ‘a movement of *incorporation* rather than inscription, not a transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated’ (193, emphasis in original).⁸⁶ What this means for Ingold is that ‘the landscape is never complete [...] it is perpetually under construction’ (199). Furthermore, our construction activities are not things we do to the landscape, they are part and parcel of the landscape in *its* perpetual becoming.

With the above in mind, let us take a journey from then until now and trace the movement of story across time and from place to place.

Then ...

Sometime in late July or early August 1873, a /Xam man called //Kabbo who had been brought to the Breakwater Convict Station in Cape Town on charges of stock-theft, narrated the following to the linguist Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd in their home in Mowbray:⁸⁷

Thou knowest that I sit waiting for the moon to turn back for me, that I may return to my place.

That I may listen to all the people’s stories when I visit them; that I may listen to their stories, that which they tell; [...] from the other side of the place.] Then I shall get hold of a story from them, because they (the stories) float out from a distance; for a story is like the wind, it comes from a far-off quarter, and we feel it.

For, I do work here, at women’s household work. My fellow men are those who are listening to stories from afar, which float along; they are listening to stories from other places. [...] [T]hey do not possess my stories.

The Flat Bushmen go to each other’s huts; that they may smoking sit in front of them. Therefore they obtain stories at them ... for smoking’s people they are. As regards myself, I am waiting that the moon may turn back for me; that I might set my feet forward in the path ...

⁸⁶ Here Ingold is following Paul Connerton, 1989: 72-3.

⁸⁷ //Kabbo is probably the most important narrator amongst the /Xam who lived in the Bleek household in the Cape Town suburb of Mowbray over a number of years because of his age (he was older than the others) and his access to a greater variety of stories.

that I may tell my Master (lit. Chief), that I feel this is the time when I should sit among my fellow men.

I do merely listen watching for a story, which I want to hear; while I sit waiting for it; that it might float into my ear. [...] [F]or when one has travelled along a road ... one waits for a story to travel to one along the same road; [for] I feel that a story is the wind.

A man's name passes behind the mountains' back. ... While he (the man) feels that the road is that which lies thus; and the man is upon it. [...] The people who dwell at another place, their ear does listening go to meet the returning man's names; those with which he returns. He will examine the place. For the trees of the place seem to be handsome; because they have grown tall; while the man of the place (//Kabbo) has not seen them, that he might walk among them. For, he came to live at a different place; his place it is not. [...] He is the one who thinks of (his) place, that he must be the one to return.

He only awaits the return of the moon; that the moon may go round, that he may return (home), that he may examine the water pits; those at which he drank. He will work, putting the old hut in order, while he feels that he has gathered his children together, that they may work, putting the water in order for him; for, he did go away. Leaving the place, while strangers were those who walked at the place. Their place it is not; for //Kabbo's father's father's place it was.

Therefore I must sit waiting for the Sundays on which I remain here, on which I continue to teach thee. That this moon ... should return for me. For I have sat waiting for the boots, that I must put on to walk in ... [f]or, the sun will go along, burning strongly. And then, the earth becomes hot. [...] For a little road it is not. For it is a great road; it is long. I should reach my place, when the trees are dry. For, I shall walk, letting the flowers become dry while I still follow the path.

The autumn will quickly be (upon) us there; when I am sitting at my (own) place ... the name of which I have told my Master; he knows it; he knows, (having) put it down (in the book).

(Bleek & Lloyd Collection, 1873: 2874-2925)

By the time //Kabbo spoke the words quoted above he was reaching the end of his powers of endurance; his narration betrays a strong sense of unease and restlessness and a sense of being 'out-of-place'. Throughout the narrative //Kabbo differentiates between a here and a there and a coming and going. He is at pains to distinguish between the place in which he finds himself and the place to which he belongs with the road as a middle-space between the one and the other. It is important to remember that at this point //Kabbo technically had the freedom to leave. His prison term had been over for some time and he had chosen to stay on to complete the work of telling his stories. In Cape Town, //Kabbo's being is de-centred, he feels out of touch, he is here but longs to be there while staying here. His physical being is in Cape Town but his existential being tends constantly towards the place called home – 'the natural abode of a certain peace or a certain joyfulness' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962: 286).

The stories that he is engaged in telling Bleek and Lloyd belong to that place there. They are not of this place here. The longer he stays on in Cape Town, the more difficult it becomes for him to hear the stories he needs to tell. The stories for //Kabbo do not reside in his head but in the landscape of his place. His people, the Flat Bushmen, move around that place and visit each other and while visiting they relate stories they have gathered on their way. These stories come from the landscape and they float on the wind, coming from a distance, behind the backs of mountains and along well-travelled tracks. They drift towards those who are alert to them, those who sit waiting for them to float into their ears.

And of course it is clear from the narrative that //Kabbo desires to return; to walk the road back to his place. He is waiting for one more moon and then he wishes to be on his way so that he can bring himself back on centre; that he can once more visit his people and listen to the stories that float on the wind.

But //Kabbo's desire to return is utopian. It is utopian firstly, because there is little left in his place that he will recognise by this time and in his heart he must have known this. The colonial plundering of the landscape had long since begun the inevitable destruction of his people. One year after his return to his place //Kabbo was dead. By the end of the century so were most of his people. Today there is no one alive who speaks his language.

It is utopian secondly, because, in the terms of Michel de Certeau, the road is not a 'bridge' but a 'frontier' (1980/1984: 126-9). //Kabbo imagines the road is a bridge, flowing in both directions, a conduit for the free movement of people, stories and names as it has been for centuries. But in fact, it has become a colonial frontier, a limit, a border between interior and exterior, legitimate and alien and movement across and along this frontier is limited, circumscribed and controlled. It allows the alien to cross only on colonial terms and in colonial interests. //Kabbo's journey to Cape Town was not a journey of free will or free flow. He came to Cape Town as 'a guest of Her Majesty's colonial government' as they say; a prisoner convicted of stock theft. He will return, eventually, but only when he has completed his task and he no longer has anything the colony values, and then only to die.

And it is utopian thirdly, because the colonial project has silenced the stories, sucked them out of their place, out of the landscape; out of the mouths of their

speakers and inserted them in 'scriptural tombs' (De Certeau, 1975/1988: 2).

//Kabbo can no longer hear stories because he is in the wrong place but also because his place has been stripped of its stories and they can no longer be heard on the wind.

For //Kabbo and the rest of the San people, stories map a place. They perform an itinerary of living, they describe a tour that converts the potential restrictions and limitations of places into dynamic changeableness (De Certeau, 1980/1984: 118-119). In other words, although //Kabbo desires to return to a place – his father's father's place – his conception of place is not bounded, it is open, a nexus in a complex web of movement in and through and along-with a particular landscape. And the stories that he gathers are not representations that cover the landscape with meaning, they are in a fundamental sense *the* landscape that enfolds those who dwell within it as well as 'the lives and times of predecessors, who over the generations, have moved around in it and played their part in its formation (Ingold, 2000: 189).

The colonial cartographers were also engaged in mapping the same places, transforming the anthropological into the geographical or geometrical. In so doing they removed the performance, the life from the place, eliminated the stories from the landscape, silencing the voices and replacing them with a text: lines on paper, spaces cut up, stakes driven into the earth proclaiming new ownership. The anthropological map and the oral tradition its existence depends upon are, as we noted in the previous chapter, constantly alive and changing, growing and shifting. They are heterogeneous in their interpretative possibilities. The geographical map seems to offer itself up for interpretation in a similar way but in fact its interpretation is limited and defined, its possibilities homogeneous and circumscribed.

Now ...

Today, in another century, in post-colonial/post-apartheid South Africa, the Cape colony is divided into three provinces: Western, Eastern and Northern Cape, and once more, all roads lead to Cape Town. The rural interior is emptying of its stories

as a steady flow of people move to the urban metropolis in search of work, education and a better life. They crowd into townships in makeshift shacks erected on any spot of empty land adding to the burden on a city already groaning under the weight of its current populace and its demands. The road is still a frontier. Resources, knowledge and information reside on the city-side; the rural, countryside is depleted and dying for the impoverished majority while the minority with access to capital, create places of beauty for their counterparts from the city.

The *Clanwilliam Arts Project* tries to turn this frontier into a bridge by reversing the flow and channelling arts resources, skills and experiences back into the rural hinterland and by trying to free the stories from the archive, re-inserting them into the landscape from which they came. Both these objectives are, of course, as utopian as //Kabbo's desire to return to his place, to sit listening to stories, smoking with his people, but, I would argue, this does not mean we should stop trying.

So at the beginning of spring each year we run workshops in storytelling, dance, music, the visual arts, lantern-making and fire performance over a week - during school hours in the local primary school and after school hours at the field station - drawing on themes and iconography from one of the stories told by //Kabbo and his fellow narrators to Bleek and Lloyd all those years ago. Then, on the final evening, on the eighth day, we hold a lantern parade through the streets of the township, cutting across the rigid lines of the apartheid urban plan, infusing the place with story and the youthful energy of its inhabitants. Finally we assemble at a designated site, along with parents, grandparents and other members of the community now numbering in the thousands, to witness a performance in which the learners share what they have learnt with the community through a multi-disciplinary telling of the selected story from the /Xam tradition, not as the /Xam would have told it, but recast for our time. In this way we are not engaging with a search for authentic local roots or a nostalgia for a lost paradise, we are instead using what remains from the past to imagine ways of dealing with present challenges.

This is heritage as performance event, a form of remembering more appropriate to the postcolony with its volatility, its excess and its contradictions, its fractures and differences.

A PROJECT OF REPATRIATION

What is clear from the above is that in this project we are dealing not with tangible or material remains but with the intangible, a body of stories that once were integral to the landscape in which the place, Clanwilliam, is located, but now have been silenced and dislocated by the excesses of colonialism and apartheid. The question we face here is how to repatriate a body of stories back into the landscape and what might it mean to do so?

The word 'repatriate' has its origins in the Late Latin word *repatriare* - to go home again (*re-* + *patria* native country). What is interesting is that the word 'repair' which can be traced to the Anglo-French *reparer* - to go back – also derives from the same Late Latin word *repatriare*. This is the reason that the English meaning of the word includes both the sense of mending/making good again and the sense of withdrawing or going to a particular place or of coming together or rallying. I would like to suggest that this etymological connection is useful to the current discussion in the way that it brings together notions of return (the bringing back home), remembering (the putting back together of the body that has been broken) and rallying (the reassembly and revival of forces for concentrated action).

In this next section I will argue that the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* engages in repeated acts of remembering that re-link the stories, the landscape and the community so as to create agency for the people in that community. It is not about keeping things safe for all time; it is about letting things loose so that they might be used and useful right now. It is also about 'reassembling the social' (Latour, 2005) through the rallying of an expanded collective that combines elements of place, story, the bodies of the individual participants and fabricated objects of fragile beauty to bring about 'small acts of repair' (Bottoms & Ghoulish, 2007). This implies a relationship between performance events and political or social effects which is

not to be assumed or taken for granted. So before proceeding any further I will try to make the case for such a relationship.

In the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890/1998), Oscar Wilde declared 'All art is quite useless.' When pushed for an explanation he wrote:

Art is useless because its aim is simply to create a mood. It is not meant to instruct, or to influence action in any way. [...] A work of art is useless as a flower is useless. A flower blossoms for its own joy. We gain a moment of joy by looking at it. That is all that is to be said about our relations to flowers. Of course man may sell the flower, and so make it useful to him, but this has nothing to do with the flower. It is not part of its essence. It is accidental. It is a misuse. (Wilde, 2000: 478)

For Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790/2007), art has no purpose but it has a look of purposiveness; it seems to have been made to have a purpose external to itself (178). More recently Hans Gumbrecht has written that art does not allude 'to any values beyond the intrinsic feeling of intensity that it can trigger' (2004: 97). However in theatre in particular there has been a sustained tradition of practice avowedly linked to a purpose or value beyond the art itself whether that purpose or value is construed as political, social, religious etc.⁸⁸ The idea of an overt 'political theatre' comes to the fore in the mid-20th century in the work of practitioners such as Meyerhold, Piscator and particularly Brecht, and most politically committed practice since then has either been influenced by these practitioners or reacted against them.

Baz Kershaw in his 1992 book, *The Politics of Performance*, sets out to investigate 'the potential efficacy of theatrical performance', by which he means 'the potential that theatre may have to make the immediate effects of performance influence, however minutely, the general historical evolution of wider social and political realities'. However, he immediately notes that 'Any attempt to prove that this kind of performance efficacy is possible, let alone probable, is plagued by analytical difficulties and dangers' (1), which probably explains his comment that 'Historians and critics have habitually fought shy of committing themselves to unambiguous claims about the possibility of a more extensive socio-political efficacy of performance' (2). Of course Kershaw is intent on arguing *for* a political effect for

⁸⁸ This is particularly true in the African and other non-Western contexts I would suggest.

performance even if he is willing to accept that it might be 'minute'. To do this, he argues, requires a tripartite focus on 'the relationships between performers and audiences, between performance and its immediate context, and between performances and their location in cultural formations' (16).

With this in mind Kershaw goes on to suggest that theatre activity in the latter part of the 20th-century could claim a measure of political efficacy particularly when it occurred outside of the theatre mainstream in alternative, particularly so-called community, contexts and outside of theatre buildings. This is especially pertinent to the current project located as it is within a specific community and distant from any purpose-built theatre space. For Kershaw such community-based performance projects have two apparent goals: (1) 'to celebrate existing community identities' or 'a reinforcement of achieved commonalities', and (2) to be 'ideologically oppositional, politically and/or socially and/or culturally radical' (245). So on the one hand there is a desire to promote community security and cohesiveness and on the other hand to introduce forms of acceptable disruption and anarchy into those communities (247).

While other commentators at the time were pessimistic about the efficacy of politically oppositional performance – for example for Eugène van Erven 'disillusion and frustration constitute a real danger for those who work in radical popular theatre. The long-term political results of their work is hard to measure and seem to be negated ... by the increasing depoliticisation of public life' (1989: 187) – Kershaw is more hopeful for performance's continued capacity for 'popular resistance and subversion through the uncovering of the hegemony of the status quo' (255).

However, seven years later, in *The Radical in Performance* (1999), Kershaw had become far less bullish in his prognosis, suggesting that 'customary versions of the marriage between "politics" and "theatre" have been infected fatally by ... new pathologies' – pathologies brought on by post-modernity and its 'acute destabilisation of the cultural climate throughout the world: an end to all the human certainties of the modernist past' (1999: 6). Kershaw identifies a 'new promiscuity of the political' in which the political has become ubiquitous, appearing in multiple forms and guises – 'identity politics, the politics of camp, body politics, sexual politics' (16) – giving rise to a radical uncertainty and a state of 'acute indecision

about the politics of theatre and performance', all brought on by the 'anti-foundational theorists of post-modernism and its cousins' who while 'offering an exhilarating release from oppressive systems of thought, also threaten to plunge us into a miasma of ideological relativity'. The result is, for Kershaw, the slow death of 'political theatre' and the proposition that it might usefully be replaced by the idea of 'radical performance'. And while this might not 'settle the issues raised by the promiscuity of the political in post-modernism ... it will allow us to more directly encounter them'. This is because the radical 'can encompass both the fundamental change and the uncertainty of outcome signalled by the post-modern and post-modernity' (17) as outlined in the definition of the term by Raymond Williams that Kershaw cites: 'Radical seem[s] to offer a way of avoiding dogmatic and factional association while reasserting the need for vigorous and fundamental change' (Williams, 1976: 210 cited in Kershaw, 1999: 18).

The central challenge for Kershaw then is, 'how to hold on to the healthy democratising pressures of the post-modern without succumbing to the dangers embedded in its tendencies to ethical relativism, political pragmatism, genetic quietism and ecological pessimism?' and his response to this challenge is:

an argument that claims for radical performance a potential to create various kinds of freedom that are not only resistant to dominant ideologies, but that also are sometimes transgressive, even transcendent, of ideology itself. In other words, the freedom that 'radical performance' invokes is not just freedom from oppression, repression, exploitation – the resistant sense of the radical – but also freedom to reach beyond existing systems of formalised power, freedom to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action – the transgressive or transcendent sense of the radical. [...] [N]ot the ways in which radical performance might represent such freedoms, but rather how radical performance can actually produce such freedoms, or at least a sense of them, for both performers and spectators, as it is happening. (18-19)

Some nine years after Kershaw's *The Radical in Performance*, Alan Read seems to enter the fray on the Wilde-side, so to speak, when he argues strongly in *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue* (2008) that theatre has no political effect. In fact he proposes that 'theatre and the political are enemies' (2008: 26) and that '[t]heatre is a total stranger to the instrumentality of political effects' (27). This, he argues, is because theatre 'cannot predict its outcomes nor can it determine its effects beyond itself' (51). But when Read makes his point that theatre has no

political effect he also slips in the qualification that this does not mean that it has no relation to politics, that it is 'in any sense *apolitical*', because 'it is, despite itself, a part of politics' (28, emphasis in original).

For Read the politics of performance are 'no longer exterior to performance, marked by the demise of the political, but bounded in intricate ways with and in performance' (6). The relationship of theatre and politics cannot be taken for granted any longer. Read's contention is that we need to abandon previous attempts to show an essential link between theatre/performance and politics – 'a fantasy of expectation and hope' - because it is 'only by separating theatre from the political that their potential relations in a practice of politics can be realised' (7). For Read the present project is 'to reassemble the social on renewed terms, to begin again' (6). In doing this we need to 'give equal consideration to actors and audiences, but also to an amplified collective of other entities, beings and non-human things that characterise the expanded field of performance in the human laboratory and the field it describes' (7).⁸⁹ The ways in which theatre/performance interrupts the given relational associations of the social is for Read, 'a process of politics' (7). But, 'It is not power, per se, that performance interrupts, but through its politics theatre ... marks and measures the errancy of power and manifests, through its deeply felt pleasure, processes, and prescriptions, the potential for injustice and the possibilities of change' (19). Between performance and the political lies a gap but this gap is not for Read 'an *aporia* that invites inaction, but a social site and an opportunity for engagement' (27).⁹⁰

As Read comments: 'Between the incommensurability of the two terms theatre and the political emerges a brief moment, in a small network, in which something can be done. Beyond any moral determination, "where there is something to be done" describes the possibility of an ethics' (45). But following Alain Badiou, as I noted in the introduction to this study, this is not an 'ethics "in general" but the identification of singular situations: "ethics of processes by which we treat

⁸⁹ Here Read is following Latour (2005) to which we will return in the next section in a little more detail.

⁹⁰ Or as Simon Bayly puts it: 'There is ... a void at the heart of appearing. But rather than simply existing as something missing, a lack or a gap, this void is possessed of a latent potentiality [...]' (2006: 206-7).

the possibilities of a situation” (47).⁹¹ Ethics in these terms is not a set of abstract injunctions but a set of concrete obligations; something that must be done, that still needs doing. For as Artaud noted, ‘We are not free and the sky can still fall on our heads. And above all else, theatre is made to teach us this’ (Artaud, 1938/1970: 60).

What the above suggests is the possibility of arguing for a measure of political effect but with the understanding that we need to proceed with caution and modesty, without making hyperbolic and grandiose claims that cannot be sustained. Instead we need to examine far more carefully the particular ways in which performance makes its interventions in specific contexts and the kinds of effects or impacts that are possible. With this in mind I will set out to argue for a political dimension to this particular project of remembering, the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*, characterised by four elements:

- Collective and engaged participation rather than individual and contemplative spectating.
- An ethics of stories and ‘storying’.
- A shift from a concentration on the effect of the work to the affect that is generated through the work.
- A recognition of the power of the beautiful to impact on the social.

Of course, none of these elements are in practice separated from each other but are braided together in the particular activities and operations that make up the project, each year, and year after year.

COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Theatre and performance more broadly are commonly understood to be collective practices in which a community of some kind is brought into being albeit for a limited period of time. This community is typically divided between that part that is on the stage participating by acting/dancing/singing (the performers) and that part

⁹¹ Here Read is quoting Badiou, 1993/2001: 16.

that is off the stage participating by watching (the audience). Both, it can be argued, are performing but differently and both are indispensable. In fact most definitions of theatre activity for example would require at the very least someone doing something while being watched by someone else.

Most academic research in the discipline however tends to focus on what is happening on-stage, much less on what is happening off-stage amongst those who are watching. As Helen Freshwater in her recent study *Theatre & Audiences* (2009) comments: 'What a review of the existing literature quickly reveals is that academic publications which address the question of theatre audiences exclusively and directly are relatively few and far between' (11).⁹² This is not the case at the level of practice in which much focus in the recent past has been placed on reconfiguring the relationship between theatre/performance and its audiences driven by the belief that increased participation by audiences would lead to an increase in political empowerment. In this sense, the relationship between the stage and the audience becomes a model 'of social interaction, clarifying our expectations of community, democracy and citizenship, and our perception of our roles and power (or lack of it) within the broader public sphere' (3).

The basic problems associated with discussions of audiences are summarised by Freshwater as: 'confusion between individual and group response' and, as we already noted above, 'the persistent circulation of exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims about theatre's influence and impact' (Freshwater, 2009: 5). With regard to the former problem she notes:

The common tendency to refer to an audience as 'it' and, by extension, to think of this 'it' as a single entity, or a collective, risks obscuring the multiple contingencies of audience response, context and environment, which condition an individual's interpretation of a particular performance event. (5)

In any audience, as in any form of collective, differences are present within individuals as well as between them and this mitigates against any simple claim to common response and as a result any common influence or collective impact. While

⁹² Susan Bennett's 1990 book *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* is the obvious exception. See also Carlson, M. (1989); Blau, H. (1990); Rayner, A. (1993).

this is no doubt true it is also clear that when we do watch a performance together there are moments when it seems as if the audience responds as one being so what we get in an audience is a shifting between individual and collective response. As Tim Etchells describes it:

Watching the best theatre and performance we are together and alone. Together in the sense that we're aware of the temporary and shifting bonds that link us both to the stage and to our fellow watchers, plugged into the group around and in front of us, the communal situation, sensing the laughter, attentiveness, tension or unease that grip us collectively, in waves and ripples, in jolts, jumps and uncertain spirals or in other formations that do not yet have a name. Sat watching we spread-out, osmose, make connections. But at the same time, even as we do so, we feel our separateness, our difference from those around us, from those on-stage. Even as we shift and flow within the group, we're aware that our place in its emerging consensus, its temporary community, is partial and provisional – that in any case the group itself – there in the theatre, as elsewhere, in our cities and streets, in the relation between nations, peoples and states – is always as much a fraught and necessary question, a longing and a problem, as it is any kind of certainty. (Etchells, 2007: 26 cited in Freshwater, 2009: 7).

So any sense of community or collective experience amongst those watching performance must be understood as multiple, fragmented, and, as fragile, temporary and provisional. There is no unproblematic or simple idea of 'we' and any claims for the political impact of a performance event would need to acknowledge this.⁹³

Now in the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* understood as a performance event, the distinction between those on-stage performing and those off-stage watching is broken down. There is no audience separate from performers; there is only one community and it is brought together through collective participation in the event. To make the claim that collective participation produces a community requires that we spend a little time unpacking these two terms: collective and participation - how they are understood in this context and how they operate to produce particular effects.

According to Claire Bishop one of the most significant features of 20th century art practice has involved 'the *social* dimension of participation' as opposed to the experience individuals might have in interactive responses to art production (2006: 10, emphasis in original). Bishop is interested in projects that strive 'to collapse the

⁹³ See Diamond (2007).

distinction between performer and audience, professional and amateur, production and reception' and in which emphasis is placed on 'collaboration, and the collective dimension of social experience' (10). In a similar vein, Irit Rogoff argues that 'claiming an interest in participation ... put[s] into question what it means to take part in culture beyond the audience functions of viewer or spectator allotted to us by most cultural arenas ... [that] cannot be sustained in the wake of the immense rethinking of positionality that the last 25 years of theoretical analysis have launched on the world' (2005: 122). Bishop distinguishes between 'an authored tradition that seeks to provoke participants, and a de-authored lineage that aims to embrace collective creativity; one is disruptive and interventionist, the other constructive and ameliorative' (2006: 11).

I would suggest that the distinction is not as clearly defined and that in performance events like the one in Clanwilliam there occurs a dialectic between authorship (the predetermination of the 'script' of the event) and a 'de-authored' free play of the collective (the emergence of the 'script' through improvised actions and chance encounters that cannot be predetermined). However, I would agree with her that '[i]n both instances, the issue of participation becomes increasingly inextricable from the question of political commitment' (11).

The three most 'frequently cited motivations' for the increase in participatory forms of art making are in Bishop's view: 'activation; authorship; community'.

- Activation – 'the desire to create an active subject ... able to determine [his/her] own social and political reality'.
- Authorship – 'ceding some or all authorial control ... regarded as more egalitarian and democratic than the creation of a work by a single artist' (a non-hierarchical social model) and also more productive of 'risk and unpredictability'.
- Community – 'a restoration of the social bond through a collective elaboration of meaning' as a response to 'a perceived crisis in community and collective responsibility'. (Bishop, 2006: 12)

The dramaturgy of the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* involves an attempt to activate the participants by: making them producers of the event rather than consumers of a pre-prepared spectacle; the ceding of at least some authorial control to the participants allowing them to play within predetermined structures but always with the possibility that their play might break apart the structure; and the possibility that participation in the collective event can for a limited period repair the disintegrating social fabric by restoring the social bond, even if/where that bond is, in Nancy's terms, 'a bond that forms ties without attachments, or even less fusion, of a bond that unbinds by binding' (1983/1991: xl).

In this way the dramaturgy leads us off the stage and into the social realm. But what does 'social' mean in this context, particularly in the light of Nancy's claim above for a binding that is also an unbinding and what Alan Read refers to as 'the common, entropic presumption that community is currently dissolute and dislocated' (2008: 13).

In *Reassembling the Social* (2005), Bruno Latour suggests that because '[t]he sense of belonging has entered into a crisis' and in order 'to register this feeling of crisis and to follow these new connections, another notion of the social has to be devised' and that this new conception of the social:

has to be *much wider* than what is usually called by that name, yet *strictly limited* to the tracing of new associations and to the designing of their assemblages. [...] [T]he social not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but only as a very peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling. (7, emphasis in original)

The above suggests two things. First, for Latour the social is much less of a thing or a particular 'domain of reality' than it is 'the name of a movement, a displacement, a transformation' (65). As such it exhibits the idea of 'fluid space' suggested by Mol and Law (see chapter 4), in which there are no clear boundaries, in which things overflow in unpredictable ways (Mol & Law, 1994: 659). It is a space of 'mixtures that can sometimes be separated. But not always, not necessarily' (660), and which despite not being solid or stable, also displays a 'robustness' in which things don't easily collapse (662). It is an idea of the social that consists of 'relations, repulsions and attractions which form a flow' (664). Second, Latour insists that we need to expand the social to include 'as full-blown actors entities that were explicitly

excluded from collective existence by more than one hundred years of social explanation' (2005: 69, emphasis in original); 'entities which are in no way recognizable as being social in the ordinary manner, except during the brief moment when they are reshuffled together'. In other words the social involves the 'momentary association' of human and other-than-human actors 'into new shapes', new forms of assembly (65) that Latour suggests be called 'not a society but a *collective*' (14, emphasis in original). And such a collective, existing within 'fluid space', is never a given it is always having to be 'made, or re-made' (34) which implies 'some group-making effort ... if you stop making and remaking groups, you stop having groups ... the rule is performance' (35).⁹⁴

The linking of expansion and on-going and active assemblage outlined here resonates with Jacques Rancière's notion of the 'distribution of the sensible' as outlined in his *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2000/2004).

The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed. (12)

According to Gabriel Rockhill the 'distribution of the sensible is the system of divisions and boundaries that define ... what is visible and audible within a particular aesthetico-political regime' (2004: 1), and that 'divides the community into groups, social positions and functions [...] implicitly separat[ing] those who take part from those who are excluded' (3). As Alan Read puts it, 'It is this distribution that allows what Rancière calls a 'police' to evoke an organisation of the sensible, accessible or attainable by some, and by definition *not* others' (Read, 2008: 12, emphasis in original).

For Rancière, politics is 'a form of experience' [revolving] around what can be seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time' (2000/2004: 13) - 'models of speech and action' and 'regimes of sensible intensity' (39). Artistic

⁹⁴ This resonates with Nancy's notion that 'Society ... is the figure ... of an ontology yet to be put into play' and his reference to Nietzsche: 'human society, that is an experiment ... a long search ... and not a "contract"' (1996/2000: 34).

practices - 'ways of doing and making' – have the capacity to intervene in and to 'reconfigure the communal distribution of the sensible' (13) producing what Rancière suggests are 'effects in reality':

They draft maps of the visible, trajectories between the visible and the sayable, relationships between modes of being, modes of saying, and modes of doing and making. They define variations of sensible intensities, perceptions and the abilities of bodies. They thereby take hold of unspecified groups of people, they widen gaps, open up space for deviations, modify the speeds, the trajectories and the ways in which groups of people adhere to a condition, react to situations, recognize their images. (39)

In other words, 'the essence of politics consists in interrupting the distribution of the sensible' (Rockhill, 2004: 3) through 'modes of doing and making' that involve those who are usually excluded from participation and that open up spaces of possibility that are also the 'space[s] of appearance' invoked by Hannah Arendt (1959: 178).

For Arendt, the space of appearance 'comes into being wherever men (sic) are together in the manner of speech and action' (178). It is the space 'where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men (sic) ... make their appearance explicitly' (177). For Arendt '[t]he *polis* ... is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be'. But the space of appearance:

does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men — as in the case of great catastrophes when the body politic of a people is destroyed — but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves. Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever. (178)

So any 'space of appearance' is temporary and fragile and it must be continually recreated through the actions and speech of individuals who have come together to undertake some common project. This coming together to undertake a common project, is what Arendt calls 'power'. 'What first undermines and then kills political communities is loss of power and final impotence; and power cannot be stored up and kept in reserve for emergencies ... but exists only in its actualizations' (178). However, such an actualization of power through acting together does not produce a

collective body, it 'introduce[s] lines of fracture and disincorporation into *imaginary* collective bodies' (Nancy, 1983/1991: 39, emphasis in original).

With this in mind, it might be important to stress at this point that any sense of a community that is brought into being through such acts of collective participation in art practices is not based on the politics of identity – on a pre-existent myth of belonging or an ownership of the body of stories that constitute the site of memory in this project. Any kind of provisional 'we' that might emerge through projects like the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*, 'come[s] into being fleetingly', and are in Rogoff's terms 'momentary shared mutualities [that] do not form a collective heritage'. What they can do according to Rogoff, is 'provide the short-lived access to power described by Arendt, not to the power of the state [the interruption of which is the politics of performance according to Rancière] but to the power of speech' (2005: 123); the ways in which people 'disclose themselves as subjects' (Arendt 1959: 163).

This is what Rancière would call 'political subjectivization'. Slavoj Žižek suggests that:

Against ... th[e] stance which allows theoreticians to 'speak for' the masses, to know the truth about them, Rancière endeavours again and again to elaborate the contours of those magic, violently poetic moments of political subjectivization in which the excluded ('lower classes') put forward their claim to speak for themselves, to effectuate a change in the global perception of social space, so that their claims would have a legitimate place in it. (2004: 69).

So in the light of the above - the reassembling of the social and the bringing into being of new, expanded collectives through participation, and a claim for a politics of interruption aimed at the 'sensible' situation - let us move on to exploring the specific mode of speech and action at play in this project: stories and what I will call the act of 'storying,' and thereafter to try to grasp what is at stake in 'those magic, violently poetic moments' Žižek invokes above.

STORIES AND STORYING

In the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* the dramaturgy involves gathering a story from the archive and inserting it into a particular geographical landscape from which it had

previously been extracted, and then allowing the present occupants of that landscape to play with that story in multiple ways.

In this section I want to separate stories from what I will call 'storying'. For my purposes, a story is a particular category or form of artistic or cultural expression defined by a set of stylistic conventions or norms. Storying on the other hand is the process of 'making and doing' with stories, that involves, variously but not only: composition, construction, playing, performance, listening, watching and responding.

The storying in the project occurs in and across three inter-related domains of activity: first, the workshops in the days leading up to the final event; second, the lantern parade as the initial section of the final event itself on the final night; third, the performance of the story, as it has been recast by the participants, as the concluding section of the final event. The workshops afford the opportunity to play with the story as a whole or in part. The playing here involves embodying and voicing, imaging and texturing, cutting and pasting, discussing and analysing, dissecting and re-framing, building and forming. The parade involves the movement or journeying of lanterns and large illuminated sculptural objects, representing the characters and other elements of the story, across and into the landscape and the playing between the participants as they go on their way. The performance involves a playful sharing of the story with an audience, that is collaborative, both in the sense that it involves large groups of performers and that it is highly interactive with its audience.

In Bishop's terms, discussed above, these three domains of activity exist on a continuum between a high degree of authorial control or scripting by the facilitation team, and a 'de-authored' free play of the collective characterised by spontaneous actions and chance encounters that cannot be predetermined. For example, while the workshops and the performance have been scripted in advance, the parade tends toward unscripted free play. However, notwithstanding the workshop script, much happens in a workshop that is unexpected and that cannot be determined in advance (this is arguably the point of a workshop). Likewise, while the parade is apparently a space of free play, it does occur within a structure and to some extent is policed so as to conform to that structure (often unsuccessfully).

The storying also involves various orders of participants. First the learners, in the workshops and in the creation and performance of the final event itself; second, the broader community, who join the parade (itself a performative event) and witness the final performance.

My interest in what follows is double: to outline how stories work as stories and then, how they work in the world.

How stories work as stories ...

The story chosen each year is not any old story. It is a story from a particular archive, narrated by particular narrators belonging to a specific linguistic and cultural community. It is also a story that emerges from a particular landscape in a specific geographical area. To be plain it is a /Xam story that forms part of a broad (Southern) African storytelling tradition which is an oral rather than a literary tradition.

Storytelling in this tradition is a public performance in which an individual teller confronts an audience with a story drawn from the tradition that is then re-composed for that particular audience in a manner that is responsive to the audience and the specific context of the telling. It is almost impossible to separate the story itself from its performance and any attempt to record or capture a story is challenged by this essential link between story and performance.

In general terms, all stories (from Africa or from elsewhere; oral or literary) operate along at least two main axes. The first axis is linear and teleological with a focus on 'emplotment' over time (Ricoeur 1983/1984: 41-2; 53-4). It consists of narrative blocks or blobs advancing logically towards a determined end. It might involve an occasional jumping backwards and forwards in time but it is essentially forward moving. The second axis is non-linear and non-temporal; in fact it has no apparent or obvious direction or trajectory at all and is more focused on 'emplacement' (Jackson, 2002: 31) – the arrangement of narrative elements in space, the logic of which is not always immediately apparent. The relative weighting or emphasis of each of these axes differs in different story traditions but there has been a general tendency in the study of narrative to emphasise the former over the

latter and to connect it with the content or message of the story. On the other hand, the second axis is to a large extent associated with, and most apparent in, the performance of the story and therefore the more performance is a feature of the particular story tradition, the more the second axis is foregrounded as we shall see.

According to Harold Scheub, who has conducted long-term, in-depth studies of the Southern African storytelling traditions amongst the *San*, the *amaNguni* along the East coast of Southern Africa, the *emaSwati* of Swaziland, and the *amaNdebele* of Southern Zimbabwe,⁹⁵ performance is a central and essential aspect of stories in these traditions: 'the meaning of a story is the totality of performance, not a simple message. Performance is the thing' (2010: 196). For Scheub, stories are not primarily about content or messages they are driven by patterned images: 'The single most important characteristic of African oral performances is the patterning of images' (110).

Now as Alan Read (1993) reminds us, performance images are quite different from 'the images of other arts' which 'are constituted in quite different ways'. Performance images are 'composed of material elements – bodies in action and speech articulated in places, and a receptive audience for that action and speech' (58), and while such images might arise from a textual source (from the particular tradition for example) they are 'not wholly dependent on any text and often arise without and despite any textual preparation' (64). An image takes us by surprise, it is a singular event for which we are seldom prepared. To support this contention, Read turns to Gaston Bachelard and his *The Poetics of Space* (1958/1964):

Bachelard saw in the image a novelty and action that denied its interpretation as caused by something else. It simply could not be explained with recourse to a history. [...] An image was not an object but a specific reality that came before thought, from reverie. [...] Bachelard believed we should be receptive to the image at the moment it appears, describing this state as 'a sudden salience on the surface of the psyche'. He believed as we have seen that the poetic act had no past in which its preparation and appearance could be followed. (Read, 1993: 84-5)⁹⁶

⁹⁵ See Scheub, H. (1990; 1996; 1998; 2002; 2010).

⁹⁶ This is a summary of Bachelard's thoughts on the image as outlined in his 'Introduction,' to *The Poetics of Space*, pp. xii-xiii.

Now while Bachelard did not focus on the *relations between* images, concerned as he was with the phenomenology of the image as a distinct and 'detached entity', performance is precisely concerned with 'a process of dialectical relations between images and other images' (Read, 1993: 82-3) - with the grouping and layering of different images which is a significant part of the dramaturgical process. This is what Scheub refers to when he speaks of 'the patterning of images'.

'Patterning' is Scheub's word for the 'nontemporal' ordering of images that creates rhythm and that 'subverts the linear surface of the story' (Scheub, 1998: 17). The 'formal result' of such patterning is what constitutes the content and the meaning of the story in the African tradition, more than simple, linear narrative plotting in a temporal sequence. The patterning of images in turn evokes emotions, which, alongside the images, constitutes the second important element of story: 'Story is nothing if it does not contain and channel emotion' (1998: 22). As Scheub explains, 'There may be messages along the way, but the ultimate message of storytelling is the complex of emotions, diverse emotions evoked' and these are worked into form by the rhythmical patterning action. And the ordering and shaping of all these emotions evoked within the teller and beyond the teller, 'in the individual members of the audience and in the collective responses of those members,' engenders a sense of community amongst all who share in the performance event (17). In other words there is no meaning disconnected from the performance itself in relation to its audience. As an un-named Zulu performer says to Scheub: 'If I am to tell you what this story means, I must tell it again' (cited in Scheub, 2010: 196).

There are two types of images at play in the /Xam stories, as with all stories in the African oral tradition: fantasy images and 'images of the real, contemporary world' (Scheub, 2010: 105). The fantasy images belong to a parallel world alongside the one we inhabit; a parallel world 'that echoes in prismatic ways' our world. But this parallel world is never disconnected from our world; the two worlds are always intertwined, folded into each other and out of their contact, 'metaphorical sparks ... fly'. In this way, the fantasy frequently subverts the real and always provides the real with new dimensions and layers of experience and meaning' (111). The traditional storytellers, according to Scheub, 'typically take ancient emotion-evocative images,

and ... build contemporary stories around them, that is, they take images from the world that we know and build them around the venerable images' (107). This is exactly what happens in the current project in which young people are afforded the opportunity to engage with the ancient and fantastical images from the /Xam tradition, rich in emotion, and to fold them into their contemporary lives. In this way something from the past becomes the catalyst for possible change in the present.

For Scheub:

Fantasy takes us to the boundaries of our experience: out there, we are not so sure. Then fantasy moves us back to the familiar, but with a significant change: the familiar can never be the same. It has been leavened, given new dimension, by an experience in fantasy. (2010: 112)

In this way the fantasy images generate strong emotions. These emotions arise, in part at least, from 'a sense of existential peril' attached to the migration, the crossing over from a familiar space (our world) into a strange, uncontained and unfamiliar space (the fantasy world) (Jackson, 2002: 33). But then Scheub goes on to suggest that alongside the patterned images and the emotions they evoke, the final important element of story is 'trope' (1998: 9), and that ultimately 'the movement of story is to metaphor' (2010: 112); at the end, the fantasy is transformed into metaphor:

As we move closer to metaphor, fantasy (which is our lack of understanding, for the images seem not to fit, not to be real) slowly forms into poetic ordering. In the end, fantasy is no longer present: its residue is, but it has been replaced by metaphor [...] a part of the activity we go through intellectually and imaginatively and emotionally as we sort out items in the wondrous puzzle given to us by the storyteller. Fantasy, then, is never an end in itself, it is the engine of change, the activity in the betwixt and between area as the parts of the metaphor form themselves and slowly begin to coalesce. (2010: 112)

The metaphor provides the structure in which the familiar and the unfamiliar can co-exist in relation and the operative means, because as De Certeau points out, a metaphor is a mode of transport - 'in Athens today, the vehicles of public transport are called *metaphorai*' - that turns stories into 'spatial journeys' across the boundaries and divides between the familiar and the unfamiliar; the certain and the strange: 'Every day, [stories] traverse and organize places; they select and bind them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial journeys' (1980/1984: 115, emphasis in original).

This emphasis on transformation and change and transportation is important here because it reinforces a point already made in the previous chapter regarding oral performance traditions, that ontologically they are only really alive when they are changing. As Scheub argues: 'Storytelling is alive, ever in transition, never hardened in time. Stories are not meant to be temporally frozen: they are alive, always responding to contemporary realities, but in a timeless fashion' (2010: 105). And this alive, responsive, changing nature of the tradition motivates the work of remembering associated with this particular site of memory.

It is also important because by focusing change and transformation it gestures back to the discussion of political/social effect above and forward to the next section on what work stories do in the world.

How stories work in the world ...

One view of how stories work in the world sees stories as establishing coherence: bringing incomplete, fragmented, veiled experience into some kind of structure that can be managed, grasped, dealt with, understood. For example, Ochs and Capps (2001) suggest that 'narrative is a way of using language or another symbolic system to imbue life events with temporal and logical order, to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present, and as yet unrealized experience' (2); to provide 'a soothing resolution' (4). Similarly, for Scheub, 'Storytellers ... are the artists who give shape and meaning to our world, to our lives' (2010: 196). For Michael Jackson (2002) storytelling is 'a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances' (15) and 'a coping strategy that involves making words stand for the world, and then, by manipulating them, changing ones *experience* of the world' (18, emphasis in original). But while Hayden White recognises that 'this value attached to narrativity in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life' he goes on to add that this 'is and can only be imaginary' (1980: 23).

Another view sees stories as generating complexity: creating opportunities for the evocation of images that far from creating coherence, complicate, disrupt,

open up thinking in less logical ways that make things seem less graspable, less understandable or manageable, creating what Ochs and Capps call 'unsettling uncertainty' (2001: 4). So Scheub also claims that it is 'the storyteller's art: to mask the past, making it mysterious, seemingly inaccessible' (2010: 195), and Jackson notes that 'stories create indeterminate and ambiguous situations that involve contending parties, contrasted locations, opposing categories of thought, and antithetical domains of experience' and that 'storytelling ... questions, blurs, transgresses, and even abolishes ... [extant social] boundaries' (2002: 25).

In reality, these two views are not mutually exclusive and stories and storying reflect elements of both in a shifting and dynamic way. Now a thoroughgoing discussion of the way stories work in the world would be far too extensive and ambitious a task for the current study. What I propose therefore is simply to list some of the ways in which stories and storying operate in the world and in particular in relation to the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*.

First, Michael Jackson maintains that 'stories both release and contain great energy' (28). In this he is in agreement with Walter Benjamin who suggests that a story 'does not expend itself' the way information does. 'It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time' (1955a/1968: 90). For this reason a story from an ancient tradition like that of the /Xam continues to make an impact today. With this in mind, Jackson sees 'the contrast between the social and the extrasocial' that we find in stories as implying 'a contrast between bound and free energy' (2002: 29).

According to this view, any social system tends toward stasis, entropy and death, unless its field of bound energy – symbolised by inflexible rules, inherited roles and fixed boundaries, as well as by psychophysical constraints on body movement, speech and emotions – is periodically reinvigorated by the 'wild' energies and fecund powers that are associated with extrasocial space and deep subjectivity. (29)

Jackson goes on to suggest that '[t]he source of the energy that both motivates and structures storytelling is the existential tension between being for oneself and being for another' (30). In other words stories are 'grounded in *social* imperatives' (29, emphasis in original) and on 'the lived patternings of *intersubjective* life' (30, emphasis in original). Storying mediates between different domains, private and

public, personal and social, self and other, familiar and strange. It provides 'strategies and generat[es] experiences that help people redress imbalances and correct perceived injustices ... so that in telling a story with others one reclaims some sense of agency, recovers some sense of purpose' (36).

So in this respect stories are in the interest of their tellers. However this is not only because they serve their worldly interests but because, as Hannah Arendt indicates 'in the word's most literal significance' interest means 'something which *inter-est*, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together' (1959: 162, emphasis in original). And while stories are usually about some 'worldly objective reality' they can also lead to what Arendt calls 'a disclosure of the acting and speaking agent' (162-3). This 'comes to the fore where people are with others and neither for nor against them – that is, in sheer human togetherness' (160) which is a feature of oral storytelling because, as Jackson reminds us, stories are 'commonly *lived through* as a physical, sensual, and vital interaction between the body of the storyteller and the bodies of the listeners, in which people reach out toward one another, sitting closely together, singing in unison, laughing or crying as one' (Jackson 2002: 28, emphasis in original).

Second, one of the major features of the /Xam story tradition is that it is filled with delinquent trickery (for the most part specifically embodied in the character of /Kaggen the trickster).⁹⁷ But the storying itself as part of the contemporary project is, I would suggest, a form of delinquent trickery that acts to disrupt the inevitability and permanence of boundaries and structures within the social realm. In this way the storying operates as a 'popular' tactic in De Certeau's conception, a tactic that acts on the 'actual order of things ... without any illusion that it will change anytime soon' (De Certeau, 1980/1984: 26). In De Certeau's terms when tactics work, order is 'tricked by an art [...] an esthetics (sic) of "tricks" (artists' operations)' (26).

For De Certeau 'a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. [...] The space of the tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play

⁹⁷ According to Scheub, /Kaggen or Mantis is 'an ambiguous creature whose composition is complex: he is god, animal and human. [...] Mantis is a culture hero and a divine trickster, [...] he creates, but he also has a destructive urge. He has godly knowledge, yet he is also capable of moral stupidity; he is sublime, yet he is also obscene' (2010: 40-1).

on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power' (37, emphasis in original). A tactic must 'take an order by surprise. [...] boldly juxtapos[ing] diverse elements in order suddenly to produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place [...]. Cross-cuts, fragments, cracks and lucky hits in the framework of a system' (37-8). In other words tactics are 'determined by the *absence of power*' (38, emphasis in original); they are 'an art of the weak' (37). As such they must take advantage of whatever opportunities or 'chance offerings' arise when they arise; they must be mobile and responsive to the event as it emerges. But as De Certeau makes clear, a tactic is unlikely to achieve lasting change because, 'What it wins it cannot keep' (37). It simply raises possibilities, points to potentialities and introduces a 'play ... into the foundations of power' (39).

Play is an essential element of the storying, aesthetically and politically, connected as it is to two fundamental storying moves: the un-making and re-making of stories that usually but not always follow on from each other. According to Nigel Thrift, 'play is a process of performative experiment', a field of speculative endeavour in which possibilities are acted out (2008: 119). For Richard Schechner play 'encourages the discovery of new configurations and twists of ideas and experience', it is 'the ongoing, underlying process of off-balancing, loosening, bending, twisting, reconfiguring, and transforming the permeating, eruptive/disruptive energy and mood below, behind and to the side of focused attention' (1993: 43).

Schechner considers whether perhaps 'scholars should declare a moratorium on defining play. Maybe as Victor Turner said in one of his last writings, play is undefinable' (1993: 24). For Turner, 'play does not fit in anywhere particular; it is a transient and is recalcitrant to localization, to placement, to fixation – a joker in the neuroanthropological act' (Turner, 1983: 233).⁹⁸ Despite this, Turner does have a go at a definition in which he concludes that while:

most definitions of play involve notions of disengagement, of free-wheeling, of being out of mesh with the serious 'bread-and-butter,' let alone 'life-and-death' processes of production, social control, 'getting and spending,' and raising the next generation [...] 'spinning loose' as it

⁹⁸ Turner specifically aligns play with the trickster figure when he writes: 'Like many Trickster figures in myths ... play can deceive, betray, beguile, delude ... dupe, hoodwink, bamboozle and gull [...]' (1983: 234).

were, the wheel of play reveals to us ... the possibility of changing our goals and, therefore, the restructuring of what our culture states to be reality. (1983: 233-4)

In the process notes Schechner:

play creates its own (permeable) boundaries and realms: multiple realities that are slippery, porous, and full of creative lying and deceit; ... play is dangerous and, because it is, players need to feel secure in order to begin playing; ... the perils of playing are often masked or disguised by saying that play is 'fun,' 'voluntary', a 'leisure activity', or 'ephemeral' – when in fact the fun of playing, when there is fun, is in playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting accepted procedures and hierarchies [...]. (1993: 27)

To play with fire is to engage in a risky activity, this is true in the project on a literal level (participants actually do play with fire). It is true on a social level too where the risk involves disrupting the given situation, the social order, and proposing a new way of speaking and acting and of being together. It is true on a personal level where individuals risk doing things they have not done before, are unfamiliar with, that might make them look strange, different, funny in the eyes of their peers. But the stories themselves are bearers of 'fire' too, filled with the energy that has been stored up for generations and the storying plays with this energy.

Third and connected to the above, storying as a process of un-making and re-making allows possibilities of changing the story to reflect different concerns and agendas. As Helen Nicholson (2005) comments about drama in general:

Drama provides a powerful opportunity to ask questions about whose stories have been customarily told, whose have been accepted as truth, and to redress the balance by telling alternative stories or stories from different perspectives. (63)

She connects this to Walter Benjamin's idea that storytelling is aligned to goodness; that it is a combination of aesthetics and ethics. Storying makes connections between life as it is and life as it could be. Recognising that there are different stories and that stories have multiple interpretations involves identifying the limits of one's own horizons and an interest in seeing alternative perspectives - 'to begin to imagine that the world as it is could be otherwise' (Kearney, 1988: 368). This involves what Arjun Appadurai calls building the 'capacity to aspire'. He argues for the development of 'practices that allow ... people to exercise their imagination for participation' (2007, 33). He notes that the imagination is a means by which people

are 'disciplined and controlled – by states, markets and other powerful interests' but he also sees the imagination as 'the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge' (2000, 6). For Appadurai, the idea of democracy has shifted from developing the capacity to participate to participating in order to develop capacity. What this means is that through active engagement, in this case in a particular performance-based heritage process, capacity and agency is developed for participation in other aspects of life.

Fourth by inserting the story into the landscape and facilitating the community's engagement with it, another identity (one historically connected to this landscape) is put back into circulation. Not as *the* identity but as one more possible identity, to play with and choose from. In this way the competing identities of the market-driven global story and the government-driven national story are supplemented with a third possibility, a locally-driven heritage story.

It is important to note however that the community does not see themselves originating with the /Xam in an uncomplicated and universal way. There is something of what Escobar refers to as 'ambivalence' at work here (2001: 48). Some make direct connections between themselves and the /Xam; others refuse these connections outright; most vacillate between the one position and the other. Outsiders often question the validity of the claims demanding compelling evidence. What is important I would argue is to reject demands for evidence of a biological-connection between the contemporary inhabitants of the landscape and the /Xam and to pose instead a place-based and class-based connection that re-imagines or recreates new forms of identity based on the past to resist other imposed identities and to achieve present political and social transformative goals. This is a process of self-production that takes what it needs from the landscape in order to survive. The greater the range of stories available in the landscape, the more chance of survival.

To return to Nicholson again:

This acknowledges that the aesthetics of self-production is built on the convergence and interplay of different narratives, and that constructing narratives of selfhood is both an ethical and creative process. (2005: 65)

This returns us to heritage and our understanding that heritage is 'not given, it is made and so is unavoidably, an ethical enterprise' (Harvey, 2001: 336).

UNDERSTANDING AFFECT

"Some sort of feeling arises. Between oneself and the world there is a new term, a holistically sensed, new texture in the social moment, and one relates to others in and through that emergent and transforming body [...] an altered state of social being."
(Jack Katz in *How Emotions Work*, 1999, 343).

There is another sense in which the project can be seen as a space of appearance and that is the sense in which something appears, an apparition, something other, something surplus, extra, more that cannot be easily accounted for but which touches us in particular ways. 'This *more* is also where language reaches its limits, a penumbral region where we are haunted by what words fail to cover, capture, conceive and communicate' (Jackson, 2002: 23-24, emphasis in original).

It is, I think, what Scheub refers to when he speaks of emotion or the 'human feeling' Susanne Langer suggests art expresses from 'our perception through sense or imagination [...] meaning everything that can be felt, from physical sensation, pain and comfort, excitement and repose, to the most complex emotions, intellectual tensions, or the steady feeling-tones of a conscious human life' (Langer, 1957: 15). It is what Read calls the 'metaphysics of theatre', 'the something more of the image', that which 'is not seen, beyond the mind's eye' and which 'remains unwritten' (1993: 58-9).

I would suggest that what is being spoken of here might best be referred to as 'affect' or 'affectivity'. Nigel Thrift notes that:

there is no stable definition of affect. It can mean a lot of different things. These are usually associated with words like emotion and feeling, and a consequent repertoire of terms like hatred, shame, envy, fear, disgust, anger, embarrassment, sorrow, grief, anguish, love, happiness, joy, hope, wonder [...]. (2008: 175)

But then he goes on to say that none of 'these words work well as simple translations of the term "affect"' (175).

Patricia Clough (2007) describes affect as: 'a substrate of potential bodily responses, often automatic responses, in excess of consciousness' (2) – the way the

body attaches and responds to a whole range of different objects. As Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) notes, 'Affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects. Thus, one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy' (19). But Clough also suggests, in addition, that affect refers to 'the augmentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, engage, and to connect, such that autoeffectation is linked to the self-feeling of being alive – that is aliveness and vitality' (2007: 2).

Thrift suggests that we should not think of affects as things or as individualized but as a kind of field of energy, an affective energy – a 'buzz' – that exists on a pre-subjective and non-representational level - 'real-time somatic experience, no longer framed as representation' (Bennett, 2005: 23). Such a field consists of forces and intensities to be experienced, entered into, rather than as particular representations filled with ciphers to be communicated or interpreted or to be owned by individuals – 'my feelings'; 'my emotions'. It also exists on what Jackson calls a 'protolinguistic' level that does not intend to 'help us understand the world conceptually or cognitively' (2002: 16) but that affords us opportunities for grasping a whole range of other experiences of the world outside the domain of language.

Despite Jackson's suggestion however, Thrift emphasises that in most recent approaches to affect,

affect is understood as a form of thinking, often indirect and nonreflective ... but thinking all the same. And, similarly, all manner of the spaces which they generate must be thought of in the same way, as means of thinking and as thought in action. Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is intelligence nonetheless [...]. (2008: 175, emphasis in original).

This is a Spinozist idea: 'everything is part of a thinking and a doing simultaneously: they are aspects of the same thing expressed in two registers' (Thrift, 2008: 178). Which means that knowledge runs together with our physical encounters in the world.

Context is an extremely important part of the generation of affect. Where we have the experiences and together with who we have them, seem to be vital. Katz

(1999) argues that our 'response-ability' is a combination of our perceptions and our reactions to what we perceive going on around us that are not separated serially but exist simultaneously, 'intertwined' (317); 'each is naturally hidden in the other' (316). We use a 'vast sensorium of bodily resources' (Thrift, 2008: 176) to respond to the context, to actions, to others engaged in actions in the same context. It is through the reactions of others that we often sense what is happening and determine our own responses. Affect arises as a result of encounters between manifold beings the outcome of which cannot be predetermined but emerges through the encounter.

So affect concerns embodied responses and attachments, actions and interactions, that generate a field of energy: of forces and intensities, through encounters between and amongst places, people and things which produces a sense of vitality, of being alive. The latter is what Read suggests is performance's specific contribution to the world, it is what he suggests performance is for, to 'confirm our commonest sense, that we are sentient beings' (Read, 2008: 5). In other words, participation in performance projects generates a sense of being alive for the participants, alive in themselves, alive to other human and non-human actors, alive to places and landscapes, to all parts of the expanded and reassembled collective – an aliveness that counters the deadening effects of modern living and the social divisions created by technology and the 'distribution of the sensible'.

James Thompson in his important book *Performance Affects* (2009) argues for a shift in focus, amongst practitioners engaged in work aimed at social transformation, from the effect of performance events and applications to what affects arise and what possibilities such affects afford. A shift to a focus on affect involves a shift away from signs and signification, from what things mean and the processes of interpretation that have always dominated in the Humanities. In Gumbrecht's terms it is a move beyond an 'exclusively meaning-based relationship to the world' (2004: 77) to one in which we might feel ourselves to be 'in-the-world in a spatial and temporal way' (80), able to sense 'the immediate physical "touch" of cultural objects' (8). This is what Gumbrecht calls 'presence effects' but to all intents and purposes I would suggest they align with a concentration on affect.

It also involves a shift from thinking about the performance event as a communication in which a particular content is transferred from one party (the performers) to another (the audience), to thinking of it as a transaction in which, what is generated by both parties through the event, passes between them, to a significant extent on an affective level. Such a transaction is about connection and engagement with others and with ideas, places and objects. It is not, as Thompson argues, 'a field of particular communicative content, but rather of capacity and intensity' (2009: 119). As such, the experience 'includes the joy – the buzz – of the participatory arts as inseparable from the total impact of the event. The sensation is no longer the adjunct, the expendable adjective, but the dynamic texture of the work through which it finds its force' (132).

Now in the Clanwilliam project, affects arise, in part, from images that are produced in the various domains of activity or phases – different kinds of images: embodied, vocal, visual (3D and 2D), aural etc. There is no doubt that these fabricated images play an important part in stimulating the affective field within the project. However, to a significant extent, affect is generated across the duration of the project as a whole through interactivity, through 'being-with', being together, through the energy flows between people. How we *are* together in the project is as important as what we *make* together in the project. There is no single artwork that can be contemplated as a whole, bounded object. There is only a durational experience to be entered into, to be tasted at different moments and that overflows any boundaries or limitations that might be imposed upon it. As Thompson argues, 'Affects last beyond the event and ... they can *linger*' (2005: 235, emphasis in original). Similarly, Guyer suggests that feeling 'need not be synchronous with the activity that produces it – it may linger on after our encounter with the object is over' (2005: 331). This counters the predominant idea that performance is ephemeral and that when it ends nothing remains. To recall Schneider, performance remains but it 'remains differently' (2001: 101). The lingering of affect stretches 'performance across time and space' and if we are serious about making claims for social change we need to 'track the contours of that extended reach' (Thompson, 2009: 158). Which is why we return, year in and year out, to dwell in this place, with these people, with stories, to touch and be touched, to remember and repair.

BEAUTIFUL THINGS

"The love of the beauty of the world ... involves ... the love of all the truly precious things that bad fortune can destroy. The truly precious things are those forming ladders reaching towards the beauty of the world, openings onto it."
(Simone Weil, in *Waiting for God*, 1950/1951: 180)

Thompson is particularly 'interested in the *affect* of beauty and beauty as an affect' (2009: 188, note 3, emphasis in original). Here beauty is to be 'understood as an intense affect generated by an object or experience that is felt by the person, but simultaneously located beyond them' (143). For Thompson this includes feelings generated on an individual level 'by what is perceived as a beautiful event, object or person – and by the collective sharing of that moment' (2009: 188, note 3). He argues that:

the sensations connected to an experience of beauty [...] enhance the case made for the importance of attention to affects in both art making and research, and a focus on beauty can, therefore, capture much of the radical potential for the proposed affective turn. (140)

This suggestion of a 'radical potential' for beauty and the affects that it generates might at first glance seem strange. As Joe Winston puts it, 'the term 'beauty' seems to raise real conceptual and moral difficulties for those educators and practitioners whose sympathies are on the side of social justice' (2006b: 43). There have been many arguments proposed against beauty: it distracts us, forces us to turn away from rather than face, the problems, challenges, injustices, the evil in the world; if it doesn't distract then it mollifies, calms, reassures us, so that harshness or pain or suffering is ameliorated to some extent and the possibility or extent of response is tempered if not cancelled completely; it is as possible for beauty to be the inspiration of evil as it is for it to be aligned to doing good - great beauty can have perverse intentions; it is exclusive and elitist and furthers cultural hegemony.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ On this last point see Bourdieu (1979).

In contrast, Winston, sets out an argument, following in the footsteps of Iris Murdoch,¹⁰⁰ 'for placing beauty at the heart of any project whose central question is 'How can we make ourselves better?' (2006a: 285) which is of course an ethical question. Winston's project is 'to analyse how Iris Murdoch's alignment of art, beauty and the development of goodness might be seen to work in contemporary practice ... [and to] expanded her parameters to include, specifically, how beauty can promote social justice'. But in doing this he is keen to 'avoid any instrumental justifications extraneous to [art's] own qualities ... [and] to seek a vocabulary of virtues that emanate from the concept and experience of beauty itself' (286).

For Elaine Scarry, in her important work *On Beauty and Being Just* (1999), the encounter with the beautiful prompts an urgent desire to reproduce that beauty in another form. However, Thompson points out that Scarry's version views the artist as an isolated figure who on encountering the beautiful 'retreats to the solitude of his or her studio to reproduce it'. Thompson urges a more relational view of this process in which 'the urge to repeat is also an urge to share, communicate and offer other people the same sense of pleasure. [...] Beauty in this formulation is a stimulus to collaborative work – it is an invitation to participate' (2009: 145).

Thompson's interest in the 'radical potential' of beauty, how to make beauty a '*force for good*', is connected to the shift from *looking at* to *participating in* that we have already noted earlier. For Thompson, 'asking participants to create something they understand to be beautiful engages them in a quest that has powerful and potentially positive results' (2009: 136). When the young people of Clanwilliam are given the opportunity to create something by working together, something that they recognise to be beautiful, they want to share this recognition of beauty and their achievement of the beautiful with other participants and other members of the community. 'This is a process that can allow people to displace the worst aspects of their lives in a moment of joy but that can also encourage a critical disposition to an unequal and unjust world' (Thompson, 2009: 159). In other words, 'Far from being valueless, beauty in being positioned within (or against) a site of suffering can be

¹⁰⁰ See Murdoch (1970).

partly involved in heightening our awareness of it. Beauty is not irrelevant to a troubled social context but can be part of its critique' (151).

It might be useful at this point to articulate a little more clearly what is meant by beauty here or what is included in the category of the beautiful. Scarry points out that 'at the end of the eighteenth century, writers such as Kant and Burke subdivided the aesthetic realm (which had previously been inclusively called beauty) into two realms, the sublime and the beautiful' (1999: 83). For Burke, in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Beauty and Sublime differ like light and darkness. So while light does reveal beauty, intense experiences of both light and darkness obliterate the object or render it strange so that the imagination is struck by awe and we experience a kind of terror. In Part I, Section VII for example, Burke writes: 'Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling [...]'. In Part II, Section II, he suggests that 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime' (1757/1990: 53). For Burke, 'The passion caused by the ... sublime ... is Astonishment, and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror' (Part II, Section I, 1757/1990: 53).

According to Burke, when we see something sublime we experience a kind of pain that is tinged with delight - 'for terror is a passion that always produces delight' (Part I, Section XIV, 1757/1990: 42) - which arises from our desire for redress, the possibility that the pain might be removed. So for Burke, it seems, the sublime gives rise to a negative pleasure and this is understood to be more intense a sensation than the positive pleasure that arises when we are confronted by the beautiful.

Likewise, For Slavoj Žižek, in Kant:

Beauty and Sublime are opposed along the semantic axes quality-quantity, shaped-shapeless, bounded-boundless: Beauty calms and comforts; Sublimity excites and agitates. 'Beauty' is the sentiment provoked when the suprasensible Idea appears in the material, sensuous medium, in its harmonious formation – a sentiment of immediate harmony between Idea and the sensuous material of its expression; while the sentiment of Sublimity is attached to chaotic, terrifying limitless phenomena (rough sea, rocky mountains). (1989: 202)

So while the beautiful is associated with shape, form, proportion, harmony, boundedness, all of which is calming and pleasurable, the sublime is associated with shapelessness, the limits of form, disproportion, disharmony, and boundlessness, all of which is agitating, exciting and induces terror so that any pleasure that is derived is 'procured by displeasure itself' (Žižek, 1989: 202). In addition, Winston points to the gendered nature of this split between the beautiful and the sublime that 'self evidently falls within a traditional masculine/feminine binary, the sublime being characterised by virtues of strength and solitariness, the beautiful by the softer virtues of charm, sentiment and comfort' (2006a: 289).

For Scarry the splitting of the aesthetic realm 'deals a blow to beauty' because beauty and the sublime are now seen 'as a *counterpoint*' to each other rather than as existing 'in their *continuity*' with each other (1999: 85, emphasis in original). She suggests that a hierarchy is established in which beauty is always relegated to a lower position, reduced, made 'diminutive' and therefore 'dismissible' (84). And, she goes on to argue:

One can see how oddly, yet effectively, the demotion from the sublime and the political demotion work together, even while deeply inconsistent with each other. The sublime (an aesthetic of power) rejects beauty on the grounds that it is diminutive, dismissible, not powerful enough. The political rejects beauty on the grounds that it is too powerful, a power expressed both in its ability to visit harm on objects looked at and also in its capacity to so overwhelm our attention that we cannot free our eyes from it long enough to look at injustice. (85)

By the time we reach postmodernism, in the writings of Lyotard for example, it is as if beauty has given way completely so that all that remains is the sublime understood as the way in which 'the faculty of feeling or imagining is called upon to make the perceptible represent the ineffable' which while doomed to failure, and potentially a cause of pain or suffering, gives rise to 'a pure gratification' – 'not a simple gratification but a gratification of effort' (1982: 68). For Lyotard, this triumph of the sublime is directly connected to the 'post-industrial techno-scientific world' in which there is no 'need to represent the representable' but rather a need to strive towards 'the opposite principle' – 'The spirit of the times is surely not that of the merely pleasant: its mission remains that of the immanent sublime, that of alluding

to the nondemonstrable' (69). And the name of these times of 'immanent sublime' is postmodernism:

The postmodern would be that which in the modern invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquires into new presentations – not to take pleasure in them but to better produce the feeling that there is something unrepresentable. (Lyotard, 1986/1993: 15)

My argument would be that we need to reconsider the splitting of the beautiful and the sublime and to posit instead an aesthetic that combines moments of both in the pursuit of doing good, which is an ethics, and of justice and transformation, which is a politics. In other words faced with a world of 'superfluous evil'¹⁰¹ and overwhelming need, in which violence, impoverishment, inequality, injustice, silencing, and a lack of aspiration or opportunity for most predominates, we need both the comfort of the beautiful and the shock of the sublime if we are to respond at all. We need an aesthetic conception that is able to recognize both the beautiful and the sublime as parts of one idea of beauty, and this beauty is at times reassuring and at times terrifying; at times painful and at times soothing; at times holding and at times shattering. It is, as Crispin Sartwell notes, that 'the world is beautiful in all these ways' (2004: 11).

And so at moments in the project we are moved, astonished, carried away by sublime awe and at others we are charmed and comforted by the beautiful, by beauty in its reassuring, 'softer' aspects. In either case, it is undeniable that the project produces flashes of astonishing beauty that are, as John Armstrong (2004) suggests, all the more powerful in their relationship to the deprivation of the context in which they occur (135). In such contexts, as Thompson points out, beauty might be both a critique of 'ugliness' and an inspiration for change – 'a desire to create a better world' (2009: 151).

Such moments and images of beauty are 'unprecedented' and stop us in our tracks. In Bachelard's terms, they cannot 'be explained with recourse to a history'. They come unprepared to surprise us and when we encounter them, when we

¹⁰¹ See Ophir (2005).

stumble upon them or when they rear up unexpectedly before us, it is, as Burke wrote, as if all the motions of the soul are suspended and we struggle to look away. As Winston explains it in relation to his first view of Bill Shannon, a dancer suffering from a rare form of arthritis who dances with the aid of crutches and a skateboard, 'I was transfixed, unable to look away. I was immediately conscious that I was witnessing something not only that I had never seen before but that I had never *imagined* seeing before' (Winston 2006a: 297, emphasis in original). This points to Scarry's contention that the encounter with beauty makes us aware of error:

making an error in beauty inevitably describes one of two genres of mistake. The first ... is the recognition that something formerly held to be beautiful no longer deserves to be so regarded. The second is the sudden recognition that something from which the attribution of beauty had been withheld deserved all along to be so denominated. Of these two genres of error, the second seems more grave [...]. (Scarry, 1999: 14)

The moments of beauty that appear in the Clanwilliam project whether as constructed or performed images or whether as relationships between the participants, the actors who make up the collective, are strikingly different – other – they are unusual, uncanny and in this sense they stand out in unprecedented ways. They are unexpected in this place and amongst these participants. There is a perception that these participants, in this place, cannot produce images of beauty and therefore the fact that they exist makes us conscious of the error of our preconceptions and we look at the participants in a different way, with different eyes. In this way the 'distribution of the sensible' is altered for those who participate directly and for those who stumble across the event and look in, as it were, from the outside.

It is a fact worth noting, however, that over the eleven years of the project's dwelling in the landscape of Clanwilliam, the frequency of truly astonishing moments of beauty has diminished, particularly for those participants who have been involved for some time. Moments that were once considered unprecedented are now more commonplace, more known and expected. Yet, despite this, the project never fails to unleash one or two unexpected moments of great beauty and for the younger participants, coming to the project for the first time, there is no history; all is new and fresh, and exciting and astonishing. This is the power and the ethic of duration

and continuity in a project such as this one is, and a kind of justice. As Emma Goldman put it, 'freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things' (1931/2006: 42).

THE EVENT

As darkness falls on the last night of the project each year, softening and smoothing the harsh edges of the landscape in the moments before it is obliterated completely in the fast approaching darkness that brings uncertainty and the unknown, an assembly of 700 young people - and many more adults - watch as an assortment of lanterns, rough assemblages of tissue paper and cane, are prepared for their final journey. There is a palpable surging of joyful energy vibrating in the space, growing within the assembled collective, an energy that the facilitators find difficult to contain, to hold back. Over the course of this night, each lantern big and small will be brought to life by the power and mystery of fire and then inevitably, this life will be extinguished. At first it is the delicate and fragile beauty of the flickering flame within each lantern, glowing more and more golden as the darkness descends, that activates the life. But as Scarry says, beauty 'like a small bird, has an aura of fragility' about it (1999: 8). At any moment this fragility is threatened by the wilder energies that surround it, reflective of real world fragilities. As the parade is set on its way, the mounting energies of the collective body are unleashed into the night. Now the fire is no longer only flickering delightfully within the lanterns but bursts into the spaces without, around and between the parts of that collective body, literally in the way that fire is used in the performance and figuratively in the loud, unpredictable wildness that is generated, threatening to spill over into anarchic chaos, resisting attempts to govern its excesses despite our most valiant efforts. And this brings with it astonishing beauty and great danger. Playing with fire is risky business; it affords the possibility for what Schechner calls 'dark play':

Dark play may be conscious playing, but it can also be playing in the dark when some or even all of the players don't know they are playing. [...] Dark play can erupt suddenly, a bit of microplay, seizing the player(s) and then quickly subsiding – a wisecrack, a flash of frenzy, risk or delirium. Dark play subverts order, dissolves frames, breaks its own rules, so that the playing itself is in danger of being destroyed. Unlike the inversions of carnivals, ritual, clowns,

and so on (whose agendas are public), dark play's inversions are not declared or resolved; its end is not integration but disruption, deceit, excess, and gratification. (1993: 36)

At times during the parade the entire event risks spinning out of control – for example some participants change the game to one of violent destruction. Groups of young boys who have not been centrally involved throughout the week infiltrate the parade and, operating as a kind of fifth column, grab lanterns from the hands of younger children and use them as weapons, indiscriminately hitting other participants on the head or back with the lanterns they have stolen as the parade proceeds on its way. This introduces first an uncertainty (What kind of playing is this? Should I play along?) and then panic amongst those who are fast becoming victims. In other words, there is a very real chance that playing will be replaced by something altogether more sinister and any political effect that storying of this kind might present can very quickly and without warning be turned into something ungovernable and quite counter-productive.

When finally we arrive at the performance itself, the third element of the project, a kind of structure descends once more that brings the worst excesses and dangers into some form of containment. Returning to the story itself lends a kind of certainty and security to the event as we move from the energy of boundless emotion to the vehicle of trope, of metaphor, that transports us back to what is safe and familiar and digestible. Not that the performance lacks danger or excess. It is full of both: in the content of the stories themselves, full of shape-shifting, reality crossing, therianthropes and tricksters, of magic and mayhem; in the way fire is literally played with, its unpredictability, always seemingly teetering on the edge of disaster; in the exploding fireworks that end the performance; in the raucous humour, the bursting into loud and joyous collective laughter and singing and sometimes tears too; and in the huge and unwieldy groupings of young dancers and actors who squash themselves into the limited spaces available on the roughly constructed, temporary, outdoor stage.

And by the end most of the lanterns big and small - those that haven't been secreted away - are consumed in a great bonfire, and in the shortest imaginable time there is little evidence of anything unusual having occupied that place, that night. But something lingers in the landscape after all has been consumed, all has come to

an end for another year. It is a lingering, as we noted above, of affect, way beyond the bounds of the event itself. But it is also a desire, stimulated by the loss that accompanies the passing of beautiful things, a claim by the socially excluded to have this again, to participate again in this way with others, to make and to do and 'to speak for themselves' and to share in beauty, in 'magic, violently poetic moments' again, and thereby to claim a legitimate place in the space of the other, of the foreign power that determines and defines the situation: 'what can be seen and what can be said about it ... who has the ability to see and the talent to speak about it' (Rancière, 2000/2004: 13).

So ...

In the *Clanwilliam Arts Project*, something from the past, a story, is repatriated into the landscape of the present, to be played with along with others. This playing gives rise to images that are at once disturbing and consoling, fantastical and real, and that constitute beauty in all its aspects and make all involved experience things in ways that move, touch, and inspire them, affording the possibility of doing good, of making the world a better place, of countering ugliness and deprivation. And this is repeated year after year out of the understanding that it can never be over once and for all; that it only exists in the doing, in the performance: 'the performance is the thing' (Scheub, 2010: 196). The space of appearance disappears with 'the arrest of the activities themselves'. As long as we continue to come together, to remember together, 'it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever' (Arendt, 1959: 178).

The *Clanwilliam Arts Project*, is, I would argue, an 'event' in Badiou's terms, that disrupts the status quo and transforms the ordinary situation. It uses the delinquency of story to transgress social limits and boundaries – the division of the social realm into categories of inclusion and exclusion: who can speak and about what, and who can make and do what. In this way it turns frontiers into bridges and allows the possibility of imagining alternative futures. In the same way that //Kabbo was able to imagine another place – back home – while remaining in Cape Town, so the practice of imagination through participation in creative acts of making and

doing, presents the possibility of developing a capacity to place the self other than where one finds oneself. In this sense it resonates with Nicholas Bourriaud's concept of 'Islets of Utopia' – small islands inserted into the order of things – in which it is possible to imagine a way of functioning differently; moments of experimentation that are also moments that resist commodification; that allow a showing that does not imply a sale (2002). Bourriaud argues that we need to support and multiply these moments of 'systemic divergence' to resist the prevailing notion of no alternatives: no alternative to globalisation, no alternative to capitalism, no alternative to the situation. In this sense, the project in Clanwilliam is an ethical response to 'a new world disorder' (Kershaw, 1999, 6-7). But as //Kabbo himself said: 'a little road it is not. For it is a great road; it is long' and we have, as //Kabbo said, only just 'set our feet forward on the path'.

CHAPTER 7: STAGING SLAVERY AT THE CAPE (*CARGO*, 2006-2007)

In the introduction to this study I proposed an anthematic structure for the thesis derived from Nabokov's idea of an 'anthemion' which Ermarth describes as: 'An interlaced, flower-like design where themes and patterns arrive and depart from various posting places, recurring and re-crossing without exact repetition and yet providing a kind of rhythmic iteration and patterning' (2000: 415). In such a 'flower-like design', each chapter forms one of the petals so to speak and the passage from one petal to another is both 'grudgingly' sequential – one after the other in the circle – and, more interestingly, transversal, moving along 'multiple pathways' that cross the circle.

Now if one were to examine such a flower, tracing the outline of each petal and investigating its particular features, nuances and textures (each different in its own subtle way while at the same time being much like those that come before and after), moving on only when one feels one has done it justice, eventually one returns to the petal with which one started. At such a moment a number of possibilities arise: either one ends the examination with a sense of the task having been exhausted; or one begins to trace the petals again but this time armed with the knowledge gained from having done it the first time; or one traces the multiple pathways backwards and forwards across the centre of the flower and between the individual petals, searching out other and more complex significances.

My project is not in reality a flower presented whole for examination but is constructed by me so we could also continue to increase the size of the flower adding more or more petals in line with Bergson's idea, outlined in chapter 2, that we never exhaust the capacity for difference. In other words if we were to identify numerous other sites of memory we could continue to work on them in the same way dramaturgically and in each case, on a molecular level at least, we would continue to identify difference. Because of this I am, as I indicated in the introduction, reluctant to suggest an ending for the study as if it could ever reach final conclusions or tie up loose ends. Any attempt to remember the past is destined

to remain incomplete, inconclusive, full of gaps and as a result, to give rise to a sense of dissatisfaction and unease that must be engaged with and not avoided by means of neatly packaged conclusions. If there is a need to rehearse or re-trace what has been discovered along the way I would suggest a return to the beginning.

On reflection, in my remembering, it is evident that the final project in the series, *Cargo*, represented a shift in the nature of the work itself. In Yin's terms, described in chapter 3, working on it we were less exploratory or descriptive and more explanatory. In other words we were not really engaged in raising new questions or in finding new ways of proceeding (although of course this can never truly or entirely be the case), nor were we really observing the process as it went along describing what we were discovering; what we were doing mostly was explaining by doing, putting to work what we had already discovered and developed in earlier projects on another site *as a form of demonstration*. The production had become a vehicle for sharing knowledge already attained/grasped more than a vehicle for searching for answers.

Then there is the exhaustion factor arising from what I described in chapter 2 as the struggle of researchers in projects such as this one to keep up with what is happening within the flux and the flow of the practice itself where invention, novelty and change are happening at the 'absolute speed of movement' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987: 293), 'beyond the threshold of perception' (281). The struggle to bring things to consciousness - the desire and the accompanying failure to translate for others what is occurring - leading to a sense of fatigue and the need to draw a line underneath the project and say enough.

So this chapter and the production it remembers constitutes the line underneath my project of remembering as a whole. As such it stands both as an explanation of the dramaturgical method developed through the project as a whole in relation to the production *Cargo*, and it serves as a revisiting of what has been achieved in the project of the thesis – not a point reached in conclusion and finality but an achieved sense of fulfillment at a certain stage (what Massey has termed 'the

story-so-far'¹⁰²), the density and weight of knowledge gained in answer to the questions posed:

- What is performance's particular contribution to remembering in the postcolony?
- What are appropriate images in the present for something that has passed?
- How might we make the archive speak in unspeakable ways?

IN PERFORMANCE

Out of the darkness, a single voice intones a lilting melody set against the extended chords of a harmonium. A number of small illuminated boats float across the darkness, tissue paper and bamboo constructions, the orange glow of the illuminating flame tinged with blue stage light. The intoning voice becomes a song listing place names, a geography of colonial trade.

Mauritius, China, Ceylon, Malabar. Madagascar, Macau, Java, Surat. Bogie, Malaysia, Mozambique, Angola.¹⁰³

Choral voices join in, unseen in the depths of the darkness. A sudden cry; a crash of thunder; lightning flashes across the stage revealing a large, double-volume packing crate, centre-stage, surrounded by a canal of water and then a strip of earth surrounding the water. The storm intensifies, with crashing waves and pouring rain and more thunder and lightning and at the height of the storm there is a cry of panic and three sides of the crate fall outwards, hitting the ground with a loud crash.

Gradually the storm fades away replaced by calm, the creaking of wooden planks on-board ship, gulls calling out in the morning air, and light slowly rising to reveal, inside the erstwhile crate, a Cape Dutch colonial house. The inside of the back wall of the crate that is still standing is now the inside surface of the front wall of the house with symmetrical windows either side and a large door in the middle.

¹⁰² Massey (2005: 9).

¹⁰³ All quotations in this section are from the unpublished play-text of *Cargo* (Magnet Theatre & Jazzart Dance Theatre, 2007).

The other three walls of the crate have fallen across the canal of water to form bridges onto the surrounding earth, their upper surfaces the polished red tiles that characterised the floors of such houses.

Inside the house is a silent tableaux of human bodies and other material goods: boxes, small crates, barrels, furniture, cushions, latticework screens, small paper boats on long poles, all composed and facing front as if set up for a painting or photograph. The gulls continue to squawk intensely while gentle waves lap against the shore.

A new chant begins and one by one the bodies leave the tableaux, deposit the material goods off stage and then return to take up a place in a straight line downstage. When all are in position facing the audience, one calls out: 'Inventory,' and all continue to chant:

In the ship Malacca: A murder, mattras [mattress], 'n kas [chest], 'n kooi [bed], Katryn [name of a person].

And then again someone calls out: 'Inventory', and all continue:

In the ship Walvis: 'n Hoopje Sout [pile of salt], a hanging man.

And again: 'Inventaris':

In the Paarl: 'n boek [book], 'n bladt [a page or document], amok, a murder, mattras, 'n kas, 'n kooi, Katryn, 'n koekje seep [cake of soap], a runaway slave, 'n hoopje sout, a hanging man, porselein [porcelain], 'n boek, 'n bladt.

At various moments in the above individual bodies step forward shouting: 'sold!', remove their shoes and announce to the audience their slave name and place of purchase as recorded in the register of slaves at the Cape.

Samson van Madagascar
Mubarak van Bogie
Hoop van Mozambique
Markus van Malabar
Cupido van Bengal
Isak van Cochin
Ram van Trancabar etc.

Then they leave the stage having placed their shoes in a line at the very front of the stage space. Finally the stage is left bare, just the empty house standing silent, waiting to be filled.

After a moment, two women enter and announce in alternating Dutch/Afrikaans and English:

Inventaris van roerende en onroerende goederen.
Inventory of moveable and immovable goods belonging to the deceased.
Een huis en erf geleegen in deese Table Valley.
A house and erf located in this Tafelvallej.
In het voorhuijs.
In the ... (struggles to find adequate translation) ... voorhuis [front room].
Agter die skerm.
Behind the screen.
'n Vaajte met ink.
A barrel of ink.

Lights change to reveal a set of latticework screens standing in the centre of the house downstage of the door, in dim light. In front of the screens stand two footmen in livery and behind the screens one can faintly make out the shapes of two women. The women are engaged in a kind of conversation but the words are not their own, their text is an inter-cutting of extracts from correspondence - conducted over a number of years and with long delays between one missive and another as a result of the slow movement of mail on ships - between Jan van Riebeeck, commander at the Cape in the 17th Century, and the *Heeren XVII*¹⁰⁴ in Amsterdam, and the Governor General and the *Raad van Indie*, the India Council, in Batavia. In the correspondence Van Riebeeck argues on the 25th of May 1652 that the Cape needs:

slaves for the dirtiest and heaviest work, to take the place of the Dutchmen in fetching stone, etc., to be obtained only at a distance and with which we will be able to make whatever is necessary – some slaves from Batavia would therefore be welcome who know how to cut stone and dig up the soil.

Over time the correspondence grows fractious as the authorities either refuse to send the slaves or cannot find a source to provide the numbers required.

¹⁰⁴ The seventeen shareholders of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) representing the various chambers that made up the company.

We have not been able to persuade any Chinese to leave their country for such a distant land and with such uncertain prospects. Neither can we at the moment send any slaves, because we require them ourselves. We trust that the natives will be sufficiently inclined for service to do all kinds of work instead of slaves.

The India Council

In the castle of Batavia, 24 December 1652

[...]

The slaves might be used for seal killing and agriculture, and their food being cheap whilst they receive no pay, the costs would be very little.

Signed Jan Van Riebeeck, Castle of Good Hope, 1653.

To the honourable Jan Van Riebeeck. Commander at the Fort of Good Hope.

We can see that you badly require slaves, especially for the seal fishery, which would save a great deal of wages, slaves only costing their food. Will consider the matter further to find out how to meet your wants. In the meantime you may inform us whether you think Angola can easily be reached from the Cape. In that case slaves might be obtained from there, as it is said that they do not cost much, and as you would require a 'flute' for the purpose we might send you one. [...] Also... regarding the proposed trade with Madagascar, as you intend to send a cargo to Madagascar, and obtain slaves and rice at that place, we shall wait till we know the success you have had, and how those slaves answer, as they are said to be of a very lazy temperament, before we decide whether that trade shall be continued or ended.

Signed by the 17, Harlem, Batavia, 30 October, 1655.

While this heated correspondence is taking place behind closed doors or screens, so to speak, a single woman enters downstage of the screens with a washing bundle on her head. She moves, slowly, gracefully, her body undulating under the load. She stops centre-stage and lowers her bundle. Other women enter and each takes a large white cloth or sheet from the bundle, washes it in the water in the canal that surrounds the house, wrings out the water and then as the music begins, joins the others in a synchronised dance with their sheets. As the dance begins, the women speaking behind the screens cease their speech and come through the screens, passing amongst the dancing women, excusing themselves as they manoeuvre around the dancers and their sheets. They are carrying papers, documents, from which they read the following announcement:

Item.

Een koekje seep.

A cake of soap.

The women are no longer reading in the voice of Van Riebeeck or the India Council but now have a contemporary feel about them, like researchers

discovering something written in a document in the archive. These two figures of the 'researchers' will reappear over and over again, inserted into and interweaving with the action as it unfolds, always carrying papers, or searching desperately for lost documents, or responding to the other bodies in the space and what they read in the documents with a mixture of passionate and earnest interest, ironic reflection and dismay – a combination of detachment and desire that reaches its most intense moment when one of the researchers, in an item entitled 'Agt Beesten/Eight Oxen', literally climbs onto one of the moving bodies in the space, her arms around his neck, her legs around his waist, facing him. And as he moves, she hangs on, moving with him; the speaking researcher and the silent subject linked together in a symbiotic dance of attachment.

The dance with the cloths continues – strong, abrupt and vigorous contractions from the centre. Cloths are washed, wrung out, flapped, flailed, beaten on the ground. Bodies sway from side to side. The feeling evoked is of toil, hardship, difficulty, and the carrying of loads. At a point they all come together in a tight bunch and drape the cloths over their heads creating an image that fleetingly suggests Islamic dress before the cloths are removed and the image fades away. The women stop their movement and stare out at the audience in silence with a stern, accusatory look. Then they break the silence, chattering animatedly amongst each other as they begin to polish the floor of the house on all fours, their backs to the audience who are now ignored. As they polish they sing, and as they sing they surreptitiously pass a cake of soap behind their backs, the one to the other down the line glancing about them in case they are seen. Then they stop polishing get up, look over their shoulders briefly at the audience and leave the stage.

What follows is a series of similar performance fragments each beginning with an announcement that starts with the word 'Item' and then presents the name of the item, sometimes linking it to a place – a room in the house or a location in the colony. For example:

Item.
Twee porseleijne potten.
Two porcelain pots.

Or,

Op de agterplaats.
In the backyard.
In de kraal.
In the kraal.
Agt beesten.
Eight cattle ... oxen ... beasts [the word 'Beesten' is difficult to translate directly in English].

Or,

Aan het gebergte.
In the mountains.
Een droster bende.
A droster gang [gang of runaway slaves].

Each performed item is a singular event. There is no obvious attempt to link one to another except perhaps rhythmically. Each item attempts to evoke a particular experience that while being intensely present and sensuously vivid is also incomplete, partial and seemingly disconnected and incommensurable with what comes before or after.

This fragmentary quality is highlighted in the item, 'Two porcelain pots', in which one of the researcher figures tells a story in a very conversational tone of walking on a beach in contemporary Cape Town and discovering something in the sand:

I was walking along and looking at my feet as they crossed the sand and suddenly I saw, sticking out of the sand, a piece of something. I didn't know what it was. It didn't quite look like a shell, but it was white. [...] I bent down to pick it up, and my hand touched something cold and hard and very, very smooth. Glassy. But it wasn't ... glass ... it was a triangular piece of porcelain. It must have been part of an old jug, or plate, or cup ... a small part of something else ... slightly curved in the palm of my hand. And it lay there – a triangular piece of porcelain filling the palm of my hand. And I turned it over and on the other side there was a very thin line, a blue line, so delicate, crossing from one side to the other. It looked like it was the part of a drawing of a garden or a tree or a flower. I turned it over again and this time I noticed on the other side there were, very fine ... just underneath the surface, like underneath the glaze ... there were hundreds of very fine grey lines criss-crossing, tracing patterns, like veins, just underneath the surface.

I looked down at the sand where I had picked it up from and started to dig ... hoping to find some other piece, something that fitted, some other part that might connect. I dug around but there were just pieces of glass and shell and no other piece that belonged to the one in my hand. There was nothing ... just this one small piece of porcelain. I closed my hand around it, this piece coming from somewhere else, another time, another place and it felt cold and hard.

I got up and walked away from the place where I found the fragment – reluctantly because I was really hoping to find something that connected. I walked up further to the edge of the beach ... there's a railing there and I was just kicking up the sand ... and the sand turned over and revealed another piece. I couldn't believe it. I was so excited. I was hoping that it was part of the same jar or bowl or plate, I bent down to pick it up and it was. The same grey veins on the one side and on the other, another part of the garden or tree or flower drawn in the same thin blue line. I turned the two pieces around and around in my hand trying to find a way for them to fit ... for the one to continue the line of the other, for the two small fragments to become one thing, for them to join, make sense, connect, but no matter how I placed them together in the palm of my hand, they would not fit.

In one item, entitled 'In de gang/In the passage, Een slavinne genoemt Grietjie van de Caab, borsmoeder, 26 jaar oud/A slave girl named Grietjie van de Caab, wet nurse, 26 years old (also called Katie Jacobs)', a woman enters alone with a rocking chair. She is singing a humorous ditty about her boyfriend called Benjamin in Stellenbosch. She stops singing suddenly and lifts the rocking chair cradling and rocking it like a baby. Then she puts the chair down and sits in it with her back to the audience. She begins to repeat a sequence of movement in which she alternates between images of being in labour and of breast-feeding which repeat over and over so that they become almost machine-like, a constant cycle of birth and feeding, birth and feeding. All we hear is her amplified breathing. Slowly as she moves, she manipulates the rocking chair so that it ends up facing the audience at which point she screams and stops moving. Then she gets up out of the chair very slowly with her hands on her lower back as if stiff and in pain and begins to move around the chair. When she gets to the back, behind the chair, she begins to massage the shoulders and arms and then the feet of an invisible figure sitting in the chair. As she does so she tells the story, in a West Coast dialect of Afrikaans, of the slave woman, Katie Jacobs, one of the few testimonies produced by a slave herself at the Cape. The dialect renders the story strange or other for a city audience, somewhat removed from what is taken to be the norm.

In another item entitled, 'Twee emmers vol water/Two buckets of water', another woman dances on the earth in front of the now closed again crate in a white dress reciting a nursery rhyme based on counting that speaks of sorrow and joy, a letter and a boy, of love and marriage and fear of the sea. As she dances her dress becomes increasingly dirty and stained as she falls to the ground and rolls around in

what has become quite a muddy patch of earth as the water from the canal has splashed out in previous items. At a particular moment she climbs into the water and her dance becomes increasingly violent and desperate, the water becoming browner and muddier as her dress becomes wetter and wetter. At the same time the two researcher figures read archival texts, found floating in the water, of suicides of slave women who killed their children and themselves rather than subjecting the children to slavery and in the background a voice sings a song of encouragement and hope based on the prophecy of Tuan Guru¹⁰⁵ in the 18th century.

Be good of heart, my children, for one day, your liberty will be restored to you, and you and your descendants shall live in a circle of Kramats, safe from fire and famine, plague and earthquake and tidal waves.

Finally the woman exits the water one last time onto the mud then backs up violently, back into the water and then up against the outer surface of the closed crate at which point she collapses in the water and all falls silent as the song and speaking comes to an end.

The various items follow one after the other, moments of struggle, of armed resistance and attempted escape, attempts at recreation and celebration, at love and marriage despite severe obstacles, resistant spirituality and obscene torture and punishment until the point of abolition is reached and the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies (1833) is read out. Then in a final item entitled 'Een parthy oude schoenen/One pair of old shoes', two women enter, collect their shoes and put them on again. They start to dance together focusing on the shoes, what they look like, what they feel like back on again, looking sideways at the other's shoes in comparison. Then they announce their real names and the place from which they come. One by one the other performers enter, collect their shoes

¹⁰⁵ 'Imam 'Abdullah ibn Kadi [Qadri] Abdus Salaam, known as Tuan Guru ... born in 1712, was a Prince from Tidore in the Ternate Islands [of Indonesia]. [...] He was brought to the Cape on April 06, 1780 as a "state prisoner" [and] incarcerated on Robben Island. [The] registration in the "*Bandieten Rollen*" for 1780 reveals that [he] conspired politically with the English in the East against the Dutch. While imprisoned on Robben Island, ... [Tuan Guru], being a *hafiz al-Qur'an*, wrote several copies of the holy *Qur'an* from memory' (SA History.org. [Online] Available: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-muslims-south-africa-chronology-0>. [2011, December 17]).

and put them on again and then announce their real names and the place from which they come.

Jennie from Pietermaritzburg.
Faniswa from Khayelitsha.
Gordon from Stellenbosch.
Vatiswa from Mbkwini.
Sean from Knysna.
Jackie from Gugulethu etc.

The two women continue dancing, slowly joined by the others until all are dancing together with their shoes on. At the end they stop, all with arms outstretched, one finger pointing directly at the audience. There is a moment of silence. Then abruptly, one of the researchers enters carrying a small wooden box and speaking loudly in a contemporary township idiom, greeting the others who greet her back enthusiastically. She climbs onto the box and begins talking about Chuck Taylors (All Star sneakers), 'the best invention ever'. But then she tells how she discovered to her disappointment that these quintessential American sneakers were in fact made in China. Which makes her think of a television documentary she saw in which young Chinese children were put to work in factories making t-shirts and jeans and porcelain ornaments for export. She turns to the broader audience out front and comments with a sardonic glint in her eye: 'The Chinese, they are clever ... train them when they are young. Just like the Indians' and everyone on stage laughs uproariously. Then she hushes the crowd around her and draws them closer in order to share a secret with them which is very 'hush-hush' and 'under the carpet':

I hear there is another cargo coming to Cape Town with amaCheap Goods ... ama T-shirts, amaJeans, amaChuckies!

All cheer in approval, then stop abruptly and stare out at the audience. The mood has changed. She goes on, seriously now.

AmaDrugs ... amaWomen.

Then the second researcher steps forward and announces:

Thus inventoried and appraised at the Cape of Good Hope.

Aldus g'inventariseert en getaxeert aan Cabo de Goede Hoop.
To the best of our knowledge we have withheld or secreted nothing.

And we are plunged into darkness once more.

ALONGSIDE PERFORMANCE

In 1834 slavery was abolished in the British Colonies including at the Cape of Good Hope. This, in a legal sense at least, put an end to a practice begun soon after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. According to Nigel Worden, in the years that followed, and while people who had experienced slavery first-hand remained alive, commemorations were held each year on the 1st of December – Emancipation Day. These took the form of 'special church services, street parades and picnic parties, dancing and the singing of *ghoemaliedjies* (drum songs) that satirized their former masters' (2009: 24-5, emphasis in original). However, by the end of the nineteenth century, with the passing of those who had experienced slavery first-hand, these began to decline and 'by the early twentieth century such events had disappeared' (25). This despite growing interest in, and memorialization of, slavery in other parts of the world, most particularly amongst African-American and Caribbean descendants of the Atlantic Ocean slave trade.

Worden suggests a number of reasons for the decline in the commemoration of slavery at the Cape. First, he suggests that the kind of slavery practiced at the Cape was different from other practices of slavery elsewhere – 'the South African experience of chattel slavery did not readily fit the images and patterns of Afro-American slave heritage ... since the large majority of Cape slaves were Asians from the Indian Ocean world' (29) - and therefore did not easily fit within the commemorative and memorial projects of organisations such as UNESCO which based their idea of slavery on the Atlantic model. Second, he argues that the classification of people into racial groups as part of the apartheid project led to alternative identities being constructed. He cites Mohamed Adhikari (2005) to suggest that:

the descendants of slaves identified themselves as part of the 'Coloured' population, as distinct from 'Black' or 'Native'. They sought to distance themselves from the indigenous African majority who had been socially segregated and excluded from political rights. (Worden, 2009: 26)

This 'Coloured' population chose on the whole to identify themselves as descendants of the Islamic Asian aristocracy who had been exiled to the Cape for resisting the Dutch elsewhere, or of Europeans who had inter-married, or of the Khoisan, rather than as descendants of slaves. And third, post-1994, the new government has promoted inclusive histories as part of the project of nation-building rather than the sectarian histories of particular groups, even where, as noted in chapter 3, this has led to a silencing or 'taming' of versions of the past.

As a result, the memorialization of slavery at the Cape was to a significant extent ignored through much of the last century, or if not ignored, manipulated to become part of the heritage of all South Africans in a kind of vast melting pot of generalized identities that made up the new South African identity. This was most clearly enunciated in President Thabo Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech on the occasion of the adoption of the new constitution.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done. (Mbeki, 1996, cited in Worden, 2009: 29).

Nonetheless, interest in slave history and the heritage of slavery, particularly for people in the Cape, has been maintained by certain families and individuals albeit in a guarded and private manner in most cases; by groupings such as the so-called *1 December Movement*;¹⁰⁶ and by a few academic historians. In Worden's view, interest in this history/heritage has recently begun to re-surface outside of the academic mainstream, particularly on the internet, on blog sites, and in fictional works, plays etc. of which the production, *Cargo*, is one.¹⁰⁷

Cargo was first staged as part of the Spier Arts Summer Season in March 2007 in Stellenbosch and then at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown

¹⁰⁶ 'New group out to woo Coloureds', *Cape Times*, 9 Oct. 1996. Cited in Worden, 2009: 28.

¹⁰⁷ Other theatrical instances Worden cites include the musicals *Rosa* (1996) and *Ghoema* (2005) and the play *Salaam Stories* (2003).

and the Baxter and Artscape Theatres in Cape Town later that year¹⁰⁸. It was the result of work on the archive of slavery at the Cape that I began alone at the beginning of 2006 and then, from October of that year, together with a group of collaborators from Magnet Theatre and Jazzart Dance Theatre. As such it was the continuation of a working relationship begun with the exploration of the Bleek and Lloyd archive and reinforced the focus on dance as a deterritorialization of theatre proposed in *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (discussed in chapter 5).

THE MAKING OF CARGO: A DRAMATURGY EXPLAINED

As I indicated previously, Paul Ricoeur has described the historiographical operation as consisting of three interwoven 'methodological moments' or phases: the documentary phase in which archives are constituted, assembled from the fragmentary traces of the past that remain in the present; the phase of explanation/understanding during which questions are put to the archive; and, the representative phase in which what has been discovered is put into a literary or written form for others (2000/2004: 136-7). The process of making *Cargo*, as with the three stage productions that preceded it, aligns to a greater or lesser extent to this triadic structure although, as indicated in chapter 2, I have tweaked them so that in my dramaturgical process they have become archival research, dwelling and emplotment.

Archival Research

Cargo began with a year-long process of research working with primary sources in the archive, and with secondary sources, the studies conducted by historians and archaeologists who have worked on the archive of slavery, physical slave sites and

¹⁰⁸ Spier is a wine estate located 45 minutes outside of Cape Town on the outskirts of the town of Stellenbosch. The estate was once a major site of slave-holding in the Cape. Today it is a major tourist site and boasts a large outdoor amphitheatre that stages opera, dance and theatre productions in the summer months. Grahamstown lies in the Eastern Cape province near the city of Port Elizabeth. It is the site of South Africa's National Arts Festival, the largest all-comers arts festival outside of Edinburgh [See Lewis (2008) and Kruger (2008)]. The Baxter Theatre is an arts centre attached to the University of Cape Town and Artscape is one of the government's Cultural Institutions: a nationally funded receiving house for Opera, Dance, Theatre and Music.

the Cape colonial period in general (Ross, 1983; Worden, 1985 and 1994; Shell, 1994; Worden & Groenewald, 2005; Mason, 2003; Van der Ross, 2005; Westra and Armstrong, 2006).

My primary concern in this first phase was to gather fragments to construct a project archive: a contained and focused collection of fragmentary traces that would be useful for the provocation of the performers in the second phase of the work. The fragments I was searching for specifically were those that shed light on key aspects of slavery but also suggested a particularly bodily or kinetic trace. As I have tried to make clear throughout the focus on the body is central to all the work we have engaged in. The body in space is the starting point of the creative process and the body is the primary agent of exploration and expression with a concurrent devaluation of the 'text' as point of origin and authority. This search for expression 'beyond the reach of spoken language' is precisely at the heart of the work, the aim of which is not only to find images in the present for what has passed but to make the archive speak in unspeakable ways.

My secondary concern in this first phase was to identify a principle or logic to guide 'emplotment', Ricouer's term for the 'grasping together' or configuration of a series of disparate events into a discursive whole that says more than what the individual parts say on their own.¹⁰⁹ The two principles that I identified to guide the emplotment for *Cargo* were listing or inventorizing and the staging/performing of social relations in the space of the colonial household and its environs. The first principle arose from a recognition of the work of the TANAP¹¹⁰ transcription project working on the VOC archives in South Africa, Asia and in the Netherlands. One of the key elements of this project involves the transcribing and translating of inventory lists of the household items of people who died intestate, produced by the Master of the Orphan Chamber. These inventories are being studied in terms of the clues they

¹⁰⁹ See Ricouer 1983/1984: 41-42 and 53-54 for more detail on 'emplotment' as a grasping together of disparate elements into a narrative whole.

¹¹⁰ TANAP (Towards a New Age of Partnership) is a joint Dutch, Asian and South African research partnership intended to preserve, restore and increase access to the VOC (Dutch-East India Company) archives. For more information see the website at: <http://www.tanap.net>. The transcribed inventories are all now online at http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/Orphan_Chamber-Cape_of_Good_Hope/index.htm.

provide about many aspects of life during the colonial period at the Cape including many aspects of the life of slaves. The inventory list was to become both structure and productive catalyst for *Cargo*. The second principle was based on work by archaeologist Yvonne Brink (1992) who reads the layout of the Cape Dutch homestead semiotically as a stage for performing power relations and hierarchies and for disrupting them. In this way we were echoing the methodology of Robert Shell in his major work on slavery at the Cape, *Children of Bondage*. His study is conducted from the level of the slave-holding household, a household he describes as a 'theatre of subordination' to create a '[h]istory not only from the bottom up, but from the inside out' (Shell, 1994: xxv). Ultimately, the production was performed on a set that begins as a double volume cargo crate surrounded by water and earth, then falls open to simulate the layout of a Cape Dutch household without walls, as if turned inside out but also turned around so that the audience's entry point is from behind as was that of the slaves.

Dwelling

The second phase of work involved dwelling in the archive created for the project. To recall Ingold, dwelling is that process by which we immerse ourselves within a particular landscape, adopting a view from within and engaging in an active, participatory, embodied and relational way with what we discover in that landscape, paying attention as we go to what is emerging.¹¹¹ It is not yet a process of building but a process of finding out how to build and what the materials for building might be. As Ingold suggests:

¹¹¹ In his latest book *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (2011), Ingold comments that he regrets having emphasized dwelling as much as he has previously because it 'carries an aura of snug, well-wrapped localism that seems out of tune with an emphasis on the primacy of movement' preferring instead 'the less loaded concept of habitation' and its active element 'wayfaring' which is 'the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth' (12). While I am all for the emphasis on movement, a central concern of my study, I don't believe that it requires a jettisoning of dwelling. In my opinion, wayfaring loses something of the spending of time associated with feeling that dwelling captures well, the idea of entering time – 'the dim hollow between two rhythmic beats' (Nabokov, 1974: 184) - in order to explore its textures, and to do so affectively. It also reduces the idea of movement to the onward and the ongoing. Movement can be movement that stays in place. The wayfaring might be for example a journeying within and often is.

To adopt a dwelling perspective is not, of course, to deny that humans build things. But it is to call for an alternative account of building, as a process of *working with* materials and not just *doing to* them, and of bringing form into being rather than merely translating from the virtual to the actual. (2011: 10, emphasis in original)

To shift the focus from building to dwelling is to shift from a fixation on forms, objects and ends that involves a realization of what has been determined and intended in advance and onto process in which we are located within 'the material flows and currents of sensory awareness within which both ideas and things reciprocally take shape' (Ingold, 2011: 10). This is what the artist Paul Klee is likely to have meant when he wrote 'Form is the end, death [...] Form-giving is life' (1964/1973: 269). To dwell in a landscape in such a way requires us to be 'sentient' and for Ingold:

To be sentient ... is to open up to a world, to yield to its embrace, and to resonate in one's inner being to its illuminations and reverberations. Bathed in light, submerged in sound and rapt in feeling, the sentient body, at once both perceiver and producer, traces the paths of the world's becoming in the very course of contributing to its ongoing renewal. (Ingold, 2011: 12).

While this aptly describes what dwelling in a landscape or project archive might involve for the performers and for me as dramaturge/director, it doesn't simply occur. One cannot simply enter a landscape and wait for something significant to happen. What is required is what Ingold has referred to as a 'taskscape' that operates in relation to the landscape – a way of engaging within the landscape through practice. For Ingold, 'Artists are ... itinerant wayfarers. They make their way through the taskscape' (2011: 215). This, suggests Ingold, is to understand creativity as forward moving and:

To read creativity 'forwards' entails a focus not on abduction but on improvisation (Ingold and Hallam, 2007: 3). To improvise is to follow the ways of the world, as they open up, rather than to recover a chain of connections, from an end point to a starting point, on a route already travelled. (2011: 216).

As I have already indicated improvisation is at the heart of the current project. The taskscape set up in this second phase of the dramaturgical process was built around physical improvisation and play – structured tasks through which different kinds of bodies (human and other-than-human) were brought into relation with each other and with fragments sourced from the archive, and out of which forms emerged.

I began by exposing performer-collaborators to the collected material and the broad territory. It was essential to help them find their way into the landscape and then to position themselves within it. This was achieved through workshops, lectures, tours to physical sites, video documentaries. Next we focused specifically on the inventory lists transcribed as part of the TANAP project. We identified objects from the inventory lists and then made our own lists arranged as alliterative strings:

A bed, a bucket, a book, 'n baadjie, a boot, a bottle, 'n bees, 'n kooi, 'n kas, 'n koekje seep, a mirror, 'n mes, 'n matras ...

Then we associated outwards from the listed objects so that:

Bed became: birth, death, washing, sexual intimacy, sexual abuse, rape, nightmare, family, sleep, suffocation, stain

Bees (beast/cattle) became: work, strength, food, land, load, castration, slaughter, meat, blood, skin, leather, dung

Koekje Seep (bar of soap) became: washing, cleaning, smell, luxury, slippery, guilt

We then listed places in the house or around the house and mapped the individual objects to particular places. Then we matched documentary fragments gathered from the archive to each object/place combination. Then groups of performers were asked to respond to these collections of cues using the body. Later I did the same thing with trial records involving slaves, listing violences enacted on the body of slaves and places that were identified in the testimonies and then mapping them together, before subjecting them to bodily investigation.

As this process of improvisation and task-work unfolded I was engaged in my own process of dwelling that involved inserting myself into what might be termed the becoming-landscape of the production in process and paying close attention to what was emerging. As I indicated in chapter 2, I was on the look out for what I call second-order fragments, bits and pieces of performance material that re-imagine, reflect on, uncover and reveal the archival fragment in interesting ways and then feeding those back into the performers' work in a kind of recycling process in which some things are discarded but others are retained. In this way particular assemblages began to take shape, using the material the performers were producing

but guided by my choice-making, my intellectual, artistic and emotional sensibilities and insights. In this way compound images, layers of physical, vocal and musical gestures and of different times – different moments of the past and the present - were being formed, that would make up the individual ‘items’ in the production itself. In other words, form was beginning to emerge from the process and that leads us to the third phase: emplotment.

Emplotment

In the third phase the images selected were emplotted, woven together into the final representative form to be shown to the audience. I have already indicated the logic of the emplotment of *Cargo*. The selected images are ordered sequentially as items on an inventory list. Each item is announced:

Een kokje seep ... a cake of soap.
Twee porseleijne potten ... two porcelain pots.

Most items are linked to a place in the house:

In de agterplaats ... in the back yard
In de kraal ... in the kraal
Agt Beesten ... eight cattle

And then the fragment is performed. There is no attempt to create cause and effect links between items. They begin and end. If there are links they involve rhythmic contrasts, and shifts in tone. The idea is that when you have read through the contents of the inventory you have determined the contents of the house. The effect is cumulative.

However, the insertion of the two researcher figures, interwoven through the fragments creates a second dramaturgical layer that was designed to interrupt the ‘grasping together’ into a discursive whole that the inventory structure was attempting to achieve. Following Ginzburg’s suggestion that the ‘obstacles interfering with the research [are] constituent elements of the documentation and [must] ... become part of the account’, the staging of the researcher position with its

complex relationship to the clues and traces that remain from the past, brings the procedures of the research into view so as to counter any idea of the presentation of an objective and complete reality, any possibility that the narration – fragmented as it is – ‘*could* translate itself into an account that filled the gaps in the documentation to form a polished surface’ (1993: 23, emphasis in original).¹¹² And, as James E. Young argues, it reminds us ‘that this history is being told and remembered by someone in a particular time and place, that it is the product of human hands and minds’ (1998: 668).

At the same time, the voices of the researchers function as a kind of Brechtian alienation device, interrupting any possibility that the audience might be sucked into or seduced by the aesthetics of the images alone; so-called ‘passive recipients’ of the performance on stage. While the participation of the audience in *Cargo* does not extend as far as it does in the *Clanwilliam Arts Project* and the audience remains off-stage in the auditorium, they are still required to participate by completing the images produced, which, as indicated in chapter 1, operate as mnemonic provocations. In this way the audience is called upon to remember creatively, to bring fragments or remains from the past together in the present into a narrative of restitution without redemption or closure; to answer the questions posed to the present by the past.

CITATION

There are only two moments in the final emplotment when words spoken by performers were written by us in the process of production in the present. The first is placed near the beginning when the first researcher figure tells of her walk on the beach in contemporary Cape Town and sets up the idea of fragments that will not fit together however hard we try to make them fit. The second occurs right at the end when the second researcher figure tells of her ‘Chuck Taylors’ and brings us quite abruptly into the present in which we, performers and audience alike, are

¹¹² See also Friedlander: ‘the voice of the commentator must be clearly heard. The commentary should disrupt the facile linear progression of the narration, introduce alternative interpretations, question any partial conclusion, withstand the need for closure’ (1992: 53).

implicated. Beyond these two moments all other text spoken are citations – direct quotations from the archival record. I would suggest that this choice of citation as performance text - and its bracketing between these two specific original contemporary text-fragments - is more than a simple attempt at a kind of historical veracity; it is, rather, a strategy that links the past that ‘comes to us in pieces’ (Seremetakis, 2000: 310) with an ethical injunction; something that still needs doing - ‘a reckoning with its repression in the present’ (Gordon, 1997: 83). To support this suggestion requires a return to Walter Benjamin.

In the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin declares: ‘To write history thus means to cite history’ (1982/1999: 476, [N11,3]). According to Hannah Arendt, Benjamin’s ‘greatest ambition was to produce a work consisting entirely of quotations’ (1968: 4). Gelley (2007) suggests that when Benjamin declares that ‘to write history [is] to cite history’ he is not referring to the obvious sense in which all writers of history rely on sources or traces from the archive to substantiate particular points they wish to make. Rather, he is referring to the history-writer’s:

ability to wrest what materials he [sic] needs and model them for his [sic] purpose. Citing involves not only the retrieval of a text or a concept but intervention into the temporal process, the activation of the past in the present: citing as *inciting*’ (25-6, emphasis in original).

For Benjamin, citation is subversive. In his own words: ‘Quotations in my work are like wayside robbers who leap out armed and relieve the idle stroller of his conviction’ (Benjamin, 1928/1979: 95 cited in Simay, 2005: 147). Phillipe Simay argues that in this sense for Benjamin the citation has ‘a perturbing disordering force’ (2005: 145); it is a ‘*shock*, which shatters the continuum and which does not resolve itself in any solution of continuity’ (147, emphasis in original). On the other hand:

the citation is a *montage* ... which puts the fragments of the past in a relation of simultaneity. Montage is this construction (different from any recomposition under the form of the whole or of a sequence) in which the fragments come into connection in order to form a constellation intelligible to the present, because no kind of continuity exists between them and it. (Simay, 2005: 147, emphasis in original)

Such a montage operates by juxtaposition, not as evidence presented in a systematic and linear way – driven by a logic of cause and effect - in order to support a thesis

stated in advance. In this sense the use of citation is both a remembering (putting back together of the fractured body) – albeit without any sense of completion or continuity – and a dismembering both because the fragment has been torn from its original context and inserted into a foreign terrain and because the fragment undermines any attempts to unify an emergent text in that new terrain.

For Arendt the use of citations from the past in the present arises from Benjamin's realization that the past cannot be recovered or easily transmitted in the present.

Benjamin knew that the break in tradition and the loss of authority which occurred in his lifetime were irreparable, and he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past. (1968: 38)

His new way of dealing with the past involved the 'strange power to settle down, piecemeal, in the present' – a kind of dwelling – but not simply to accept it as it is but 'to deprive it of "peace of mind", the mindless peace of complacency' (38). This he achieved by the collecting and gathering of fragments from the past – out of the 'pile of debris' (Benjamin, 1955a/1968: 258) - and their insertion into the present with the intention of inducing a disturbance or 'shock'. For as Benjamin himself noted, the power of the quoted fragments is 'not to preserve but to purify, to tear from context, to destroy; the only power in which hope still resides that something might survive this age – because it was wrenched from it' (Benjamin, 1955b/1978: 271). Arendt describes this process as:

A pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to the light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the corals in the depths and to carry them to the surface [...]. (1968: 51)

But, at the bottom of the sea, that which was once alive in a different context has undergone a 'sea change', and what is brought to the surface to insert in the present – 'the pearls and the coral in the depths' – has crystallized, turned into something different, somehow immune from the elements and from decay – something 'rich and strange' with a power other than its original conception. This use of the 'rich and the strange' constitutes a different concept of tradition for Benjamin. As Simay notes, for Benjamin: 'tradition is not at all a principle of continuity, or something that

can be mastered, but rather the sudden appearance of an ethical injunction' (2005: 138).

The present cannot elude the injunction that the past addresses to it; it must do justice to it, rescue it by answering its call. [...] [T]he rescuing of the past in the present means wrenching it from the normative process of transmission, citing it to restore its true force, continuously deformed by its successive recompositions. (152)

In other words, the transmissibility of the past is converted into its citability, its strange reappearance in the present - deformed in its 'successive recompositions' - enriched with a particular subversive force and power. And as it reappears, it unsettles, it calls to us in the present, demanding a reckoning '*out of a concern for justice*' (Gordon, 1997: 64, emphasis in original). We cannot remain complacent, disconnected, disinvested; in the history of the present we are all called to account.

In this way, in *Cargo*, we move from fragment, through citation, to implication. For we cannot ignore the injustice from which our work originates. We must be aware from whence we inherit the past. That what is citable, what traces remain of the slave period at the Cape, were to a significant extent produced by the dominant class; the voices of the oppressed are muted, hidden, lost. This must be one of the senses of Benjamin's claim that:

There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is never free of barbarism, so barbarism taints the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another. (1955a/1968: 256)

We must acknowledge that what we produce in the present about the past, our many attempts to give form to an absence – whether in writing or performance or in any other way - is tainted, imbued with failure, a barbarism. But then, as Kevin McLaughlin suggests, perhaps Benjamin was being more literal in his use of the word barbarism, perhaps 'barbarism designates a specific kind of linguistic deformation that comes from foreignness. The alien speaks, or rather misspeaks, in barbarism' (2006: 8). In this sense to remember the past is to cite the past that is also to misspeak the past out of an obligation towards it.

DRAWING THE LINE

“... wherever you are, there is somewhere further you can go.”
(Tim Ingold in *Lines: a brief history*, 2007: 170)

In one sense, to draw a line, is to establish a limit, a border beyond which we are not to go – a containing frame around a territory. Such a line creates an outside that is beyond our concern and into which we will not venture. The outside is beyond our scope either because what it contains does not apply to us or because we have run out of time or space or energy or desire to engage with it. However, in another sense, lines are also indicative of movement – a way of going or travelling through a territory or landscape. Such lines of movement are, according to Ingold in his *Lines: a brief history* (2007), either ‘an assembly of *point-to-point connectors*’ or ‘the *trace of a gesture*’ (74-5, emphasis in original). The former conception understands the line as joining up various fragmented elements – known in advance - to produce ‘a finished object, an artefact’ (75) which has nowhere more to go or to grow into. It is according to Paul Klee, ‘the quintessence of the static’ (Klee, 1961/1973: 109). The latter conception is an embodied and dynamic tracing through the landscape that produces an inscription as part of its on-going flow. Such a conception ‘embodies a certain duration’ and is ‘intrinsically dynamic and temporal’ and is ‘free to go where it will, for movement’s sake’ (Ingold, 2007: 73). In drawing a line in the current project I hope it is clear that I intend a movement that is not a connecting up of points but a gesture of (re)tracing through the landscape of the study – ‘remembering the way’ (Ingold, 2000: 147) along a tortuous and open-ended line with many ‘trailing ends’ to follow still (Ingold, 2007: 169-70).

It is my contention that the production of *Cargo* aptly demonstrates many of the concerns and challenges, historiographical, ethical and dramaturgical, that this study of remembering in the particular present of the postcolony has been engaged with. It reflects the resistance of the past to being known at all: the inevitable gap between the past event and the artwork in the present; the fragmentary, imagistic and ambiguous nature of the work and its refusal of closure or redemption; an

embodied, sensuous and experiential approach to memory-work both in the work going on and in the work accomplished; an interest in erasure and disappearance and an anti-monumental impulse; and the shift of emphasis from the art object itself to the relationship between that object and the audience/viewer.

While attempting to surface subjugated histories hidden from view in the past it has encountered the dangers and complexities of the present. The danger for example that in surfacing a once silenced history, other histories are in turn rendered silent so that the past becomes singular and petrified once again, purged, as Mbembe notes, of all ambiguity. And the complexities and difficulties all those who try to render a past present in the here and now must face.

Performance is an embodied way of engaging with the past that offers the possibility of exploring aspects of the past that are difficult to engage with through more conventional approaches. In other words, performance allows us to touch the past differently. Embodiment here is in one sense a synonym for physical – an approach by means of the body – but any conception of embodiment that takes bodies to be self-contained and packaged and therefore set off one against the other must be avoided because it tends to turn us away from what is actually happening on a sensory level around us, what is there to be experienced in the spaces in-between. In other words embodiment as it is understood here must imply also the opening of the body to the fluid space that surrounds it – its capacity for leakage and absorption – and its opening to other bodies, human and other-than-human – its relations and ‘response-ability’.

But performance, through its embodiment, touches us too, it generates a field of affective energy, of forces and intensities in which things ‘hit us or exert a pull on us’ and it provides the means of engaging in that field of energy and stretching the moment of that engagement so as to ‘slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique’ (Stewart, 2007: 6). It opens the possibility for a different kind of thinking to emerge, a ‘thought in action’, which is as Thrift suggests, ‘a different kind of intelligence about the world, but [an] intelligence nonetheless’ (2008: 175). Which recalls Avery Gordon’s idea of ‘sensuous knowledge ... receptive, close, perceptual, embodied, incarnate ... always involv[ing] knowing *and doing*’ (1997: 205, emphasis added).

Paradoxically, as I noted in chapter 3, it is performance's embodiment, this alternative mode of working, that makes space for the disembodied – the ghostly – that which 'cannot be seen with ordinary clarity yet' (Gordon, 1997: 195) but must be reckoned with 'graciously attempting to offer it a hospitable memory *out of a concern for justice*' (64, emphasis in original). And the theatre is, I would suggest, an ideal space for such a reckoning because it is well versed in producing the kinds of spaces in which haunting flourishes: heterotopic spaces, strange and other spaces, in which the previously unrelated, the incompatible and incommensurable, are juxtaposed; spaces in which it is difficult to hold things together, spaces characterised by fragmentation, ambiguity, disorder and dissolution, disturbance and anxiety, reminiscent of the postcolony itself.

And when in such spaces language is undermined and syntax breaks down, the moving body inserts itself, offering new forms of expression, new syntaxes - 'blocks of sensation' - a felt intensity composed of more than mere articulation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1991/1994: 167). In this way performance offers not a repetition but a re-figuration of the past that traces the outlines of other absent bodies bringing them to visibility for a brief moment and then allowing them to disappear again. In this space the articulable is challenged by the visible – always at war with one another but always driven to take the leap 'over the irrational break or the crack' that lies between the one and the other (Deleuze, 1986/1988: 65) as we are driven to take the leap across the abyss from present to past and back again.

BACK TO THE BONES

One of the motifs that runs through the mise-en-scene of *Cargo*, across the inventory list, is the steady accumulation of papers until finally, in an item called '13 spades' a large trunk is brought onto the stage filled to the brim with paper. Suddenly from within the pile of papers a figure explodes upwards into a standing position, still in the trunk freeing herself from the mass of paper. In silence she begins to knock on the bones of her body. The body is amplified. The silence is filled not by words but by a desperate and insistent knocking of bones resonating through the space of the theatre. Which brings us back to those bones we began with at

Prestwich Place and a question asked earlier in chapter 1: are they artifacts or ancestors? 'Facts in the ground' that must be tested or mnemonic traces, signposts to something intangible and silent that lies beyond; the absence we struggle to make present.

But *Cargo* is merely a title pointing to something that has to be brought into being through the collective efforts of performers and audiences. It too is an absence that must be made present every time it is performed. This might be performance's particular and subversive contribution to the history of the present. The fact that it must be worked at, brought into being, creatively imagined, re-invented, collectively sustained, argued over each and every time. That it is never complete, never stable, never fixed once and for all. As Derrida comments: 'Inheritance is never a given; it's always a task. It remains before us' (quoted in Bennington, 2000: 37).

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Appendix A – Production Details and History

53 Degrees

53 Degrees was created by Magnet Theatre during the first part of 2002 on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT). In the beginning it involved only myself as the director and Jennie Reznick as main performer. Research was carried out at the Robben Island Museum and at the South African Library. At a certain stage of the process, when the ideas had gelled to a significant degree, two additional performers were added: Gosekwang Poonyane (a recent graduate from UCT's Drama department) as the Baker and Makana and David Johnson (a student in the Drama department) as the Librarian. Additional creative collaborators were Jane Rademeyer (Sound design and Musical Composition) and Fritha Langerman and Carine Zaayman, two lecturers from UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Art, (Projections and Installations). Lighting was designed by Kobus Rossouw.

The first version of the production was staged on the fringe at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. It was performed in an abandoned power station just outside of the town that we had converted into a performance space. Audience were ferried to and from the venue by taxi.

The performance was divided into three parts. It began with an installation, on the ground floor in a kind of ante-room, consisting of rows and rows of white flotation devices mounted on bricks, so that they seemed to float above the ground. The audience was then led up an old, iron staircase to the large turbine room above to view the performance itself. After the performance, the audience descended, via a second staircase, into another ground floor space in which a second installation had been installed consisting of large-scale, sepia images printed onto cloth of women adventurers and mountain climbers of the Victorian-era.

Each performance was attended by around 100 people over a period of one week.

The second version of the production was performed in Cape Town in 2003 in the Intimate Theatre, a small, 60-seater, black-box space which forms part of the UCT Drama department. It is in fact a wooden, pre-fabricated building and so has

something of a shed-like feel to it. Whereas, in the first version, library elements had been inserted as part of a much more complex design of different levels and set elements which also included nautical gear such as ropes, pulleys and other kinds of tackle, the room in the second version had been designed to represent a library entirely and was much reduced from the scale of the first venue. This meant that the audience was also much closer to the performance the second time round.

For the second version, there was one cast change with Gary Naidoo (another recent graduate from UCT's Drama department) replacing David Johnson as the Librarian.

Each performance was attended by between 50 and 60 people over a two-week period.

Onnest'bo

Onnest'bo was created by Magnet Theatre in collaboration with the District Six Museum and rehearsed on the campus of UCT during the second half of 2002. The company consisted of Mark Fleishman as director, assisted by Jennie Reznick, with Thami Mbongo Jennie Reznick, Lulama Masimini, Craig Leo, Charles Tertiens, Amrain Ismail-Essop, and Riana Alfreds as performers. All of the performers had been trained at UCT and taught by Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznick. All had graduated and were working as freelance performers.

The set was designed by two Michaelis School of Fine Art students, Justin Brett and Erik Roren. A musical score, consisting of a collage of musical styles prevalent in District Six prior to the removals and sourced from the sound archive at the District Six Museum, was created for the production and recorded by Mac McKenzie, Hilton Schilder, Robbie Jansen, Boeta Kaatjie and Zolani Mahola, all high-profile, professional musicians based in Cape Town. The first four of the musicians listed have particular relationships to District Six as a place.

The research for the production was done through the District Six Museum with the assistance of Nadia Davids, Julian Jonker and Quanita Adams, all at the time, postgraduate students at UCT.

The production was first performed in the open-air amphitheatre outside the Iziko Natural History Museum in Cape Town over the summer months at the end of 2002 to approximately 80 to 200 people each night for roughly four weeks.

Over the first half of 2003 and again in 2006, *Onnest'bo* was performed to students in High Schools across the Western Cape province. Between 7 and 8 performances were done per week over 8 weeks in total. This means a total of approximately 60 schools were reached around the urban Cape Town metropolitan area and in rural communities and smaller towns at some distance from Cape Town. In any one performance 500 to 1000 students would attend. In addition to watching the performance, each school class received a package of information on various themes related to forced removals and teachers received booklets of follow-up exercises for classroom use. The District Six Museum arranged inter-generational workshops at schools or at the museum during which older members of the community who had experienced removals engaged directly with the students.

The production was also performed on the UCT campus as part of the Cape Town Arts Festival (2003), on the Main Festival programme at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown (2003), in the Northern Cape towns of Okiep, Nababiep and Steinkopf near the Namibian border [2006] and in the Homecoming Centre at the District Six Museum itself [2005]. The production was also invited to tour to the *Leu Tempo* Festival on the island of Reunion to a predominantly French-speaking audience of school learners and festival-goers [2006].

Through the various tours the cast changed as follows:

- Thami Mbongo was replaced first by Mbulelo Grootboom and then by Thando Mthi.
- Lulama Masimini was replaced first by Wiseman Sithole and then by Luvuyo Mabuto.
- Craig Leo was replaced by Stefan Blignaut and Charles Tertiens by Gary Naidoo.
- Amrain Ismail_Essop was replaced by Jazz Levenberg and then by Jacqui du Toit.

- For all touring versions, Jennie Reznick did not perform and Riana Alfreds played her part. In such versions, the part originally created by Riana was amalgamated with the part created by Jennie Reznick which reduced the number of performers overall.

Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints

Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints was created over a six-month period between August 2003 and March 2004 as a co-production between Magnet Theatre and Jazzart Dance Theatre. It was directed by Mark Fleishman and choreographed by John Linden, Ina Wichterich and Sifiso Kweyama under the direction of Alfred Hinkel. An original score produced by Heather Mac for the production of *The Sun, the Moon and the Knife* [1995] was developed and added to by Neo Muyanga who played live in the performances, at times accompanied by Thandile Mandela and/or Wonder Made. The production was designed by Craig Leo with lighting design by Paul Abrahams and sound design by Tony Madikane.

Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints was performed by Jennie Reznick and a cast of 25 dancers from the Jazzart Dance Theatre and the Jazzart Dance Theatre Young Adult Training and Job Creation Programme.

JAZZART DANCE THEATRE: Jackie Manyapelolo, Ananda Fuchs, Gordon Andries, Levern Botha, Bruno Wani and Mpho Masilela.

JAZZART YOUNG ADULT TRAINING AND JOB CREATION PROGRAMME: Mike Alfonso Dias, Luvuyo Bakana, Prince Bebe, Stefan Blignaut, Ilse Carroll, Ricardo Daniels, Douglas Griffiths, Phindile Kula, Julio Louw, Gustin Makgheledisa, Owen Manamela, Lee-Anne Meyer, Refiloe Mogoje, Nanzi Nojilana, Lana Paries, Joel Rose, Grant van Ster, Kasheefa Williams and Marlin Zoutman.

The production premiered at the Oude Libertas Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch in March 2004. It then went on to perform on the Main Festival programme at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown and the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town in July 2004. It was re-staged in Johannesburg at the Wits Theatre as part of the FNB Dance Umbrella in February 2005 and thereafter toured to Mogale City, Muldersdrift, close to the Cradle of Humankind, in March of the same year where it

played to a large audience of school learners in an outdoor arena. At the end of 2005, the production was taken into the desert in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape and staged in a kloof (canyon) between two mountains for the local communities of Okiep and Nababiep for one performance.

Cargo

Cargo was created over a period of one year during 2006. The original research was done by Mark Fleishman with the assistance of Leila Davids, a graduate student at UCT at the time. The research took place at UCT and at the Western Cape Provincial Archives in Cape Town where much of the slave records are housed. In October 2006, workshops began with the cast to introduce them to the material that had been sourced for the project in the first ten months of the research.

Cargo was directed by Mark Fleishman and choreographed by John Linden, Ina Wichterich and Ananda Fuchs under the direction of Alfred Hinkel. An original score was composed by Neo Muyanga who played live in the performances. The production was designed by Craig Leo with lighting design by Paul Abrahams and sound design by Tony Madikane.

The cast included Jennie Reznick and Faniswa Yisa from Magnet Theatre and eighteen dancers from the Jazzart Dance Theatre and the Jazzart Dance Theatre Young Adult Training and Job Creation Programme.

JAZZART DANCE THEATRE: Gordon Andries, Levern de Villiers, Douglas Griffiths, Phindile Kula, Luvuyo Mabuto, Owen Manamela, Jackie Manyapeloe, Refiloe Mogoje, Grant van Ster, Bruno Wani, Marlin Zoutman and Ilse Carroll.

JAZZART YOUNG ADULT TRAINING AND JOB CREATION PROGRAMME: Samantha Fortuin, Vathiswa Nodlayiya, Nathi Sangweni, Thembeke Zondi, Shaun Oelf, Adam Malebo.

The dancers were all in their twenties and none had undergone any post-school education other than practical, professional dance training.

The production premiered at the Spier Amphitheatre in Stellenbosch (an outdoor venue) as part of their summer season in early 2007. It ran for one week to audiences of around 250 to 350 people each performance. It was then invited onto

the main programme at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown in July of 2007 where it was performed in the Monument Theatre the largest venue in Grahamstown to close the festival. There were three performances. It returned to the Baxter Theatre in August of the same year and performed in the Main Theatre to capacity houses of around 500 people for one week. In October 2007 it was re-staged at the Artscape Theatre for 5 performances in the large, proscenium-style venue, again playing to audiences of in the region of 500 people each night.

University of Cape Town

53 DEGREES

A Magnet Theatre production

Directed by Mark Fleishman

Performed by Jennie Reznick, Gosekwang
Poonyane and David Johnson (Grahamstown) /
Gary Naidoo (Cape Town)

With the creative collaboration of
Jane Rademeyer (Sound design and Musical

Composition)

Fritha Langerman and Carine Zaayman
(Projections and Installations)

Power Station, National Festival of the Art,
Grahamstown
July 2003

The Intimate Theatre, Cape Town
November 2003







































